Absolute Duo Volume 1

source : http://www.baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php?title=Absolute_Duo:Volume_1

【著者】

柊★たくみ
ひいらぎぼし・たくみ

主にPCゲームのシナリオライターとして活動中。
代表作は『Aster』『星空へ架かる橋AA』など。
若い頃はちっぱい好きだったが、現在はきょぱいの方が好き(*´∀`*)o彡゜おっぱい！おっぱい！
しかし偉い人が言った『おっぱいに貴賤無し』の精神を取り戻すため、本作でリハビリをすることに相成りました。

【イラストレーター】

浅葉ゆう
あさば・ゆう

昼寝が好きなイラストレーター。
オーダーメイド枕が欲しい今日この頃。

カバーイラスト／浅葉ゆう　装丁／AFTERGLOW

柊★たくみ
Illustration 浅葉ゆう

アブソリュート・デュオ！
告白は蒼刻の夜に

アブソリュート・デュオ！
告白は蒼刻の夜に
Absolute Duo

MF文庫J
ひ-05-01
MEDIA FACTORY
580

アブソリュート・デュオ

告白は蒼刻の夜に

柊★たくみ

Illustration
浅葉ゆう

決意を固め、巴が最後の勝負に出た。
腹を狙い《鉄鎖（チェイン）》を放つ。

（ユリエ、キミは強い。今の私よりも……。だが――）

「負けるわけにはいかない！
橘の名にかけて!!」

Absolute
Duo

（……。こ、これって……）

やがて少しずつ
視界が元通りになってくると、
俺は自分がとんでもない状況に
なっていることを把握した。

俺が今、裸の美少女を
抱きかかえているということを。

「俺は……俺にはやらなくちゃならないことがあるんだ!!」

「いつか必ず、貴方達には闘う時が訪れますわ」

「私にキミを侮辱した罪を贖わせて欲しい」

「トール。あなたのことがとても気になります」

「九重くんって、あったかいね……」

九十九朔夜（つくもさくや）

九重透流（ここのえとおる）

主人公。《焔牙（ブレイズ）》が武器では無く《楯（イレギュラー）》な《異能》。

橘巴（たちばなともえ）

ユリエ＝シグトゥーナ

銀髪のクラスメイト。
透流のことを気にかけている。

穂高みやび（ほたか）

CONTENTS

第一章　「この《楯(たて)》へ――」　015

第二章　「あなたのことが気になっています」　050

第三章　「私を殴れ!!」　092

第四章　「また、アップルティーを」　125

第五章　「約束、だよ」　162

第六章　「お前の背中は――俺が護る!!」　207

第七章　「ユリエに――アイを!!」　224

エピローグ　256

『I pray, that you will reach to become the Absolute Duo one day.

Prologue

«Absolute Duo»——.

I never had any time to inquire as to the meaning of those words.

"——Ku!!"

The mark called «Aster» appeared on my chest and emitted a strong heat.

The heat spread throughout my entire body instantly, making it become hard to breathe.

This hellish fire was tearing me apart.

However, this was a ritual.

A power that surpasses mankind——the process of sublimating by taking «Lucifer» into your body.

"Ugh...ah...aaaaaaaaagggh!"

I shouted in agony, expressing the feeling of having my blood, flesh and bone burned.

Shortly after, my body was surrounded by «Flame».

The hellish fire, which was overflowing from the «Aster», went wild, as if it was trying to burn me, the very person who had released it, to ashes.

But I could not give in.

That's because I would not be able to obtain what I desire unless I overcome this «Flame».

(I... I have a wish I must fulfill!)

That's right. I can't stop until I reach my goal.

For this reason, I must control the «Flame» that burns wildly.

No, I should be able to control this.

That's because this «Flame»——is my «Soul».

"Ooooooooooooooh!!"

I shouted with all my strength. I then raised my fist up and grabbed my «Flame».

"«Blaze»!"

Responding to the «word that carried strength», the «Flame» encompassed my entire body, burning wildly as if it was trying to incinerate me, then swirled around my arm like a snake, diffusing a bright light.

"Ku...!"

Because it was so bright, I wasn't able to keep my eyes open and ——

Eventually the light disappeared. I moved my gaze to my arm, and was shocked by what I saw.

My «Flame» has turned into a «Shield».

"This... is my «Blaze»...?"

"«Irregular». That's how I would put it."

The person who had been watching over me silently since I said that finally spoke.

Devilish, or ominous.

These words came to my mind as I looked at the little girl in a gothic dress.

«Irregular»——there was only one reason for this girl to say that.

Normally, a «Blaze» which was used to define the «Soul» would have been shaped into a weapon.

However, the thing which materialized on my arm, without a doubt, assumed the shape of a shield.

The mass of metal was thick, heavy and hard, giving me the impression that it could definitely not be cracked or pierced.

(How ironic...)

For a person like me who was not able to protect, giving birth to a «Shield», a symbol of protection...

Despite my memories of the past I could not return to——

The girl in the black dress brought an end to my reminiscence.

"Now, go. The path that «Shield» will lead you to... I'm really looking forward to it."

Leaving with her laugh, the girl in the black dress disappeared into the darkness.

The only thing left was silence.

This was the beginning of my story——the story of Tooru Kokonoe.

Chapter 1 『To this Shield———

Part 1

The moment the silver girl showed herself, all sound disappeared from the auditorium. It was similar to the moment when the sea waves drew in.

Likewise, the moment I saw her, I took a breath and became speechless.

You definitely would not forget her once you had seen her —— a girl with such an appearance was standing at the entrance of the Kouryou Academy ceremony hall.

Her silver-blond hair came down to her hips. Her skin, as white as snow, looked pale and her ruby-coloured eyes certainly made it obvious that she was a foreigner after a single glance.

(She's basically like a bisque doll……)

The reason I felt that about her was not simply because of her appearance, which was giving off the feeling that she was an illusion.

But rather, despite the multiple stares, I could not catch a single expression cross her slightly childish face.

That silver girl, every move of hers was attracting attention — *ring*.... walked forward as the bell rang.

Step.... step.... in a situation where the sound of her shoes echoed within the quiet atmosphere, while having everyone stare at her, her actions and demeanor made me feel like I was watching a scene from a film. This girl was walking forward with complete disregard for the countless stares, fixed on every move of hers.

She walked past me and when she sat down three rows in front of my position, the chain of silence was finally broken and chatter could be heard, mixed with some sighs of relief.

"Haa…… I guess that's what you would call a beautiful girl……"

The girl with a pony-tail who is sitting beside me said this with a sigh.

"…… Hey, can you at least reply to me?"

While my shoulder is being poked by her fingers, I faced the girl.

"Were you perhaps talking to me?"

"Is there anyone else?"

While looking around, I saw that the seat diagonally in front of me and the seat behind me were empty. There was a girl reading through the school entrance pamphlet diagonally behind me.

"……Sorry, I didn't realize it."

As I apologized, the girl smiled.

"Fufu, looks like you are the type of person who can talk normally."

"Huh?"

"You had a frown on your face this whole time. So I, who am sitting beside you, wanted to do something about this awkward atmosphere."

"Ah…… I apologize again. I was concerned about something."

"And you are telling me that your concerns weren't a serious issue compared to that beautiful girl from a foreign country?"

"Haha, looks like it."

I ended up making a bitter smile to her comment, which she made while putting on a meaningful smile.

"Ahaha, I can understand that feeling despite being a girl. She is such a beautiful girl, so it would be natural for you to have your eyes taken by her. ……But I wonder why she came all the way to a school like this?"

A school like this. — There was a reason why the girl with the ponytail said it like that.

The Kouryou Academy, the school I will be attending from today onward, unlike the average high school, is known for being a special technique training school.

The special techniques we will be learning at this school are — battle techniques.

For the harmonious Japan, it is an extremely special school that teaches techniques which are not needed in our daily lives.

"She must have her own reasons."

She came all the way from overseas to learn battle techniques, so that silver girl must have her own reasons.

"…… There is also the possibility that she has been living in Japan from the start."

"Ahaha, there certainly is…… But she sure is a cute and beautiful girl. Oh my, I'm so jealous of her."

"I agree with you, but I think you are quite the beauty yourself. "

"Am I? Fufu, thank you… wait, what!? W-W-Why did you suddenly say something embarrassing like that?!"

"I just said what came to my mind……"

The girl sitting beside me had her light colored hair tied up, so I had an impression that she was a lively girl. Her face looked both beautiful and cute and she possessed the atmosphere of a girl blossoming into a woman. I understood that she is sociable since she initiated the conversation and judging by her ability to casually discuss difficult topics without making me feel bad, I suspect she might have been popular during her middle school years.

"N-Normally, people won't say that even if it comes to mind… …!"

"Is that so?"

"Of course it is—"

"…… I'm sorry, but can you quiet down a bit?"

The cold voice which came from behind us belonged to the girl who was reading through the pamphlet.

"Ah…… I-I'm very sorry!"

"Sorry for making a ruckus."

"It's alright…… If you are going to quiet down, then I won't say any more."

Both the pony-tail girl and I faced forward after apologizing.

"Cough. A-Anyway…… don't say anything like that again so suddenly. Depending on the person, they can get the wrong idea……"

"Y-Yeah, I got it……"

Even though I nodded—

(What does she mean by wrong idea……?)

I made a big '?' mark inside my head.

The pony-tail hair girl put her hand to her chest to calm herself down and she talked to me once again after taking a breath.

"Umm, it has kind of become an awkward situation, but let's start by introducing ourselves. I am Imari Nagakura, let's get along."

"I am Tooru Kokonoe. Let's get along, Nagakura."

"Call me Imari, Tooru."

Imari winked at me with a smile.

After we introduced ourselves, Imari began the conversation anew by bringing up what must have been the most discussed topic within the auditorium.

"Hey, Tooru, what was it like for you when you sublimated with 《Lucifer?"

"I thought I was going to burn to death."

"Pu, ahahahaha."

Imari laughed at my reply—

"…… Cough."

Because of the cough from the girl behind us, she put her hand onto her mouth immediately and lowered her volume.

"I felt the same, I thought I was going to burn to death."

Imari nodded while giggling.

"Even though it was explained to us beforehand, I sure was shocked. But with this we are…… no, everyone in this auditorium can no longer be considered a normal human anymore."

"Yeah…… Though I said that, I still don't feel like we have changed."

"You mean as in having become an 《Exceed……?"

"Yeah……"

《Exceed——

Refers to those who were given the biological enhancement nanomachine called 《Lucifer which was made by the organization called Dawn Institute several years ago.

By injecting it to those who had the 《Adapt (one in every one-thousand people), they would be able to attain a body which surpasses the limits of a human, and also due to their enhanced mentality, they would also attain the ability to manifest their Soul into the weapon called Blaze.

However, this issue was told to us for the first time immediately before receiving 《Lucifer today. That is why I replied to Imari in this fashion despite seeing Blaze with my own eyes. I still did not have the feeling that I had sublimated to become a Exceed.

(Though I will realize it when I move my body……)

I might have realized it sooner if I had tested my body right after I had the 《Lucifer given to me, but because of the listless feeling I had due to the burning sensation, I came to the auditorium while having doubts about my Soul manifesting into a Shield.

……However, I don't feel like moving around my body in here.

When I was having this discussion with Imari, I heard the sound of the speakers being turned on.

"Ah, looks like the entrance ceremony will begin."

Soon after, the sound of the microphone test, -- [Ah……test, test] -- echoed through the auditorium.

[Everyone, silence. We will be starting the entrance ceremony shortly. I, Mikuni, will be in charge of the ceremony.]

[Silence] -- A man, in his late 20's, whom I'm assuming is a teacher, said again while standing on the stage and the noise within the auditorium settled down.

[The entrance ceremony for the high school division of Kouryou Academy will now commence. First, the chairman of our academy has a few words for all of you, the new students.]

The next moment the ceremony began; I was shocked.

That was because I saw a familiar person wearing a gothic style dress walking up to the stage.

(—! That's the girl from before……!?)

Without a doubt, the person on stage was the girl who gave me the 《Lucifer.

[Welcome to Kouryou Academy, I am the chairman, Sakuya Tsukumo.]

Chairman, this girl who doesn't have the image of a chairman, and she who has or hasn't reached the age of ten, started her

speech magnificently. Her hair, as black as the abyss, was tied into two parts and her figure, wrapped in a black dress, made me experience the same feelings as I felt during our first encounter, both enigmatic and ominous, like she was concealing something.

(I was already shocked at the giving……)

Even back then, I was thinking why was a girl in a place like this…… then she gave me the 《Lucifer and while I was in shock and panicking after having received the Blaze, she disappeared.

(I never expected that she would be the chairman of this academy…… But why did a person in such a position go through the trouble of giving it to me……?)

It's certain that she wasn't helping me.

There must be a reason behind it, but I couldn't think of any.

I'm both shocked and amazed by her appearance, so I was not able to listen to the chairman's speech.

"Looks like you are shocked about this."

"Y-Yeah. Of course I would be. She's that small, yet……"

"There was a photo and a profile about her in the pamphlet. Didn't you read it?"

"The school fee is free of charge and uses a boarding school system. On top of coming with three meals, I also saw they would be giving out daily expenses."

"Other than that?"

I looked away silently.

"Read through them properly……"

"……I agree with that woman. Geez, why are you always like that?"

The one who entered our conversation while sighing was the male student who was sleeping in the seat in front of me.

"——! T-Tora!? Why are you here!?"

[You, sitting over there. Please refrain from talking.]

I accidentally said it out loud due to this familiar face, and I had the speaker warn me.

Despite closing my mouth immediately, I could hear laughter around me.

(Ugh, I stood out in a bad way……)

When I looked down with my red face, Imari asked me.

"Is he your friend?"

"Yeah."

The boy that talked to me just before is my friend, Tora.

Even if the schools we went to were different, I came to know him when the dojos we attended started to affiliate with each other for martial arts. Also since we were the same age, we had sparred many times since middle school. Since he was a small built boy with glasses he may look quiet, the truth was he had a big attitude and he also had a bad mouth. But there was a part of him where he was good to others, and he was someone who you could take a liking to——

(But I never expected to meet him here……)

I didn't see him in the latter half of middle school due to my own circumstances, and since I didn't have the chance to know where he would be going, meeting him here was totally unexpected.

"Who are you calling your friend? We just happen to know each other, and only happen to have met quite often."

"……Isn't that what you call a friend?"

"Sh-Shut up. To begin with, you are always——."

Then there was a cough from behind me, and it came from the girl from before.

"~~~~~~! E-Either way at least read the pamphlet, you fool!"

Tora faced forward after shouting with a low tone.

(His self-important way of talking sure hadn't changed.)

At the same time I felt nostalgic about his way of speech, I also felt a bit relieved that there was someone I knew here.

"……Oh, my bad. Continue from where you were, Imari."

"Okay. ……Well, chairman Tsukumo originally belonged to the Dawn institute, the organization that built Kouryou Academy, and I heard that she was involved with the research as a genetic scientist."

"That's amazing that she is a scientist despite being so small…… Ah, if she is a genetic scientist, then is she involved in《Lucifer in some way?"

"Not sure. I don't know that much about it……"

"……Hmph, she most likely is. The enhancement with《Lucifer is due to alteration of genetics after all."

The one who answered instead of Imari who tilted her head in doubt, was Tora who was supposed to have been facing forward.

"Kouryou Academy is a laboratory institute that was solely made for her, and the guinea pigs that were gathered for that experiment are us."

"Ugh…… You sure do say it in a disturbing way……"

To Tora's words who decided to join back into our discussion, Imari made a stern face.

(——Guinea pig, huh……)

If Tora's hypothesis was right, then this special technique training school which was an irregular little garden not only had the abnormal existence of 《Exceed and Blaze, but it seemed like the reason for making this place wasn't normal either.

(Well, as long as I can fulfill my aim, I don't care what kind of place this is.)

When I thought about it like that, I naturally had myself gripping my hands tightly.

On the other hand, it seemed like the chairman's speech was about to end for this entrance ceremony.

From the chairman who was acting magnificently which was far off from her age's appearance, she was about to end the ceremony with a voice which gave me chills.

[All of you will be acquiring different kinds of techniques and knowledge within this Kouryou Academy. But please remember that all of these are to make all of you go even higher. That will serve as the school's policy, which will be absolute……Lastly, I will end this ceremony by sending this prayer to you all.]

The chairman stopped her speech there, and looked around the new students—

and she spoke those words again.

[I pray, that you will reach to become the 《Absolute Duo one day.]

"Huh……?"

"What's wrong, Tooru?"

"No, just now the chairman……"

Since the ceremony had finished, she should be getting off the stage, but the chairman remained at the spot.

As if she was answering my suspicions, the chairman spoke again.

[Now, we will have the new students start the traditional event of our school, the 《Qualification Ceremony.]

"Traditional event?"

"There's nothing written about something like that in the pamphlet……"

Looking at the schedules put on the walls, the event which would follow after the chairman's speech should have been the warm welcome from the student representative of the current students……

[Before beginning the 《Qualification Ceremony, there is something you must do. Please confirm the person sitting next to you. The person next to you will be your partner for the ceremony you will be partaking in.]

I looked at Imari, and Imari looked at me.

"So what are we going to do with the partner?"

I obviously tilted my head with questions, but I understood the answer for that immediately from the words the chairman would say next.

[From here, we will have you battle with your partner.]

"What……!?"

The moment we were told about that event, I—no, not just me, but there were several gasps from various part of the hall.

[The traditional event, 《Qualification Ceremony that is about to start now will be the entrance test to enter the Kouryou Academy. The winner will be permitted to enter the school, while the loser will be asked to leave immediately after having the Lucifer retrieved back from them.]

Unlike us who were in shock, the chairman said an outrageous thing with a calm face.

After her words, the auditorium was in silence—.

Eventually, when they started to understand the meaning of her words, the new students started to panic.

(An entrance test during the entrance ceremony……!?)

Just like me, Imari wasn't able to hide her shock about this, and she started to mutter while staring at the chairman with wonder.

"You are joking, right……? Even if this is a special technique training school, you can't just make us do this on our first day…… B-Besides, what do you mean by entrance test!? Wasn't it that anyone can enter this school as long they have the 《Adapt!?"

"I'm curious about that as well, so I want an answer. Besides, if there were such traditional events like that, wouldn't it be weird that we didn't hear about this from those who failed the test?"

Tora threw that question to the stage while putting on a rough attitude that made you think that they didn't have the relationship of a teacher and a student.

But the one who answered that wasn't the chairman, but the speaker; the man called Mikuni.

[I don't remember saying that there wasn't any entrance test, though it is true that I did say you have the right to enroll in the school if you have the 《Adapt. And there is a simple reason why there wasn't any leaked information regarding the entrance test. In terms of the things going on within our school, we have ourselves restricted the information about us in many different ways.]

To Mikuni's shallow smirk, I realized that the things he told us were the truth.

The auditorium got noisy due to the panic and disturbance.

[Since all of you have understood this, I will be moving on to the explanation.]

But the girl in the black dress seemed like she wasn't concerned about it that much, and started to explain the rules without hesitation.

[You are basically free to do whatever you want in this battle, — in other words there are no restrictions on the use of weapons. Of course we will permit you to use your 《Blaze. The battle will be decided by forfeiting, or if we determine that you are no longer able to fight. Also, if the result isn't determined within ten minutes , we will make both students fail——]

"P-Please hold on!"

[What is it?]

Even if she was interrupted from her explanation, the chairman looked towards the girl who said that without changing her expression.

"Isn't it too much for you to reject us from enrolling just because we lose in a match!!?"

"Y-Yeah, she's right!!"

Having that girl's word as a opening, there were many yells from various parts of the hall.

"What will happen to the future of those who lose!?" "Don't screw around!!" "Are you going to take responsibility for this!?"

However—

[……This is just an entrance test which is present everywhere. To survive by kicking off others, a simple rule obeying the competition to survive, this is just a simple war to enroll. Though the time and details are different.]

The chairman didn't even flinch at the yells, and she gave an atmosphere where her cold eyes and words made the new students silent.

(Competition to survive, huh……)

To have yourself survive, you have to steal the future of those you face.

Even if it wasn't actually related to our life, it would still have your path closed if you lose, so there wasn't any mistake in what the chairman said.

"B-But why is it battling……!? Can't we just have a normal test ……?"

One of the people who couldn't agree with this, Imari, asked her.

You could say that it was the justification of the majority of those within this hall, and I also agreed with her opinion.

[A day will definitely come when you will have to fight. After you are dispatched to the security maintenance squad of the Dawn organization as an 《Exceed, there will be a time when you are placed into a battle where you have to risk your life, definitely. ……But a time like that won't stop just because of your preference. ——You should all know that by now after hearing that much.]

"……So the 《Qualification Ceremony is the first decision the academy is giving us, huh."

[That's exactly right.]

The chairman smiled at my comment.

[If you don't agree with the way this academy does things, then you are free to leave this auditorium. Except, in that case, we will obviously come to the decision that you have given up on enrolling into Kouryou Academy.]

The atmosphere within the auditorium froze.

Of course. We were suddenly told about this entrance test out of the blue and then they told us to fight, so there was no way we could nod our heads and say yes.

And if there were no restrictions to this battle in terms of using weapons, not only would you have the fear of being hurt, but you would also have the fear of hurting your opponent. If it went wrong, there was a chance that it wouldn't just remain being wounded, so there was no way you could decide about this so easily.

However—having us do that while understanding what's going through our mind was what you would call the whisper of a devil.

[Now, just before you begin, there is one extra piece of information regarding the 《Blaze that I will explain in order to make it easier for all of you to fight. Blaze is a weapon that was created by manifesting your Soul due to enhanced willpower——and also for that reason it has the trait of being able to damage only the Soul. So it means that you will only wear down the spirit of the opponent you have attacked, and it does not hurt your opponent physically and won't take the life of others, so it's a special weapon that is used for suppressing.]

I wondered just how much her words had made the new students present here feel relieved and blew away their hesitation.

I could tell just by looking that there a commotion.

One by one, there were those that had made up their minds.

(It sure has become troublesome……)

My decision wasn't about whether I agree to this test or not, and it also wasn't about battling, hurting, or being hurt.

It was about the fact that I had to take down Imari if the test was to start.

She was someone that I had only met this morning.

We just talked for less than an hour.

(But I……)

This feeling naturally moved to my hand where I asked the chairman a question.

"……I'm sorry, can I ask you one thing?"

[What is it?]

"Our partners—, is it possible to change the opponent we have to face?"

Even though I asked her while having a faint hope—

[……Are you able to ask for the examiner to rate you on English that you are good at since you are bad at Mathematics during the test? Do you think such a wish could be allowed?]

"That is……"

To the ruthless words that were returned to me, I wasn't able to continue my words.

There most likely must have been someone in the past who asked the same question.

"Tooru, it's okay. Your feelings alone are enough for me."

Imari smiled sadly.

"Ku……!"

(Do I only have the choice to accept such an idiotic test……!?)

Even though I bit down on my teeth hard, I couldn't come up with a method to evade this.

I even felt like turning back by saying that I couldn't cope with such crap.

But I couldn't do that.

I came to this Kouryou Academy craving for an existence that was out of normal bounds.

To obtain the 《Power in order to fulfill my desire.

(Damn……!)

Even so, I'm hesitant.

I shouldn't even be thinking about this.

But, in order to do that I have to defeat Imari.

"Imari……"

I said Imari's name.

Just that.

I couldn't say the next word.

I knew that I had to say something.

……But what?

I didn't know.

I couldn't think up anything.

While I was lost in finding the right words, and right before I was able to find what to say—

The chairman moved on without any mercy.

[Fight, El Seed(Children chosen by heaven)!! And grasp hold of your own future with your own hands!!]

Her sharp words. At the same time the sound of the bell rang throughout not only the auditorium, but the whole school.

After a pause—

"Uwaaaaaaaah!"

The shout from someone became the actual signal for the start of this.

After finally realizing the situation they were in, several of them ran to the exit while screaming.

There were also those who were standing there because they still hadn't realized it.

And those who are willing to fight, that had accepted this test shouted out the 《word that carried strength, and there were blue-white Flames released from various places.

Sword, spear, bow and many other weapons had appeared within my sight. When they took the weapons in their hands and they swung them towards their opponents.

The sound of the battle and weapons colliding echoed throughout the auditorium.

Under that situation, we were the only ones that were standing silently while looking at each other—.

And the one who finally spoke was Imari.

"I don't like the sentence 'It can't be helped' but—there is something I must accomplish. In order to reach that goal, I want to enroll in this academy at all costs. So—."

Imari looked sharply and straight into my eyes, and then shouted.

"I can't give up on this path!"

She put her hand to her chest, and 《Aster appeared due to the word that carried strength.

The blue-white glowing 《Flame was Imari's Soul and her Will to fight.

Imari grabbed it without hesitation.

The 《Flame changed into a long, stick-like shape, and then—right after giving out a strong glow, a Blade that had a beautiful curve was within Imari's hand.

"Tooru, you bring out your 《Blaze too……!"

"……"

Imari made her decision. But I…….

"……There is no time. If you have no will to fight, then I will end this!! Iaaaaaaaaaaaahh!!"

At the same time with her making a spirited shout to encourage herself, Imari jumped at me.

(----------Uh! Fast!!)

Thanks to the explosive strength powered up by the 《Lucifer, the distance of a few meters disappeared in an instant.

“Kuh!”

When I suddenly took a back step to dodge it, the swung down 《Blade grazed my clothes and slashed the floor.

The deep slash mark left on the floor was not something that could be thought of coming from a girl’s physical strength.

(This is an 《Exceed…….! The talk about crossing the boundaries of humans wasn’t exaggerated at all.)

“You have a nice body. Do you perhaps practice something?"

"A little martial arts?”

“Yes. For me it’s Kendo.”

“No wonder it was a nice strike.”

I returned a small smile back to Imari who was taking a sword stance.

“Fufu, thank you. Although it is offensive to say that after dodging. …….But I won’t miss next time.”

Imari’s eyes turned serious again.

“Tooru, I’ll say this once more. Bring out your 《Blaze……..!”

“Imari……”

I was still hesitant.

However, I knew there was nothing I could do-------and the only choice I had was to accept this test.

But even if I manifested my tool, how should I fight?

My 《Blaze is a Shield----a defensive tool.

Instead of defeating, it was something meant to protect.

That's why in order to defeat Imari, I would need to make a direct attack---------swinging my fist was my only choice, but the chances of hurting her was high if I did so.

(I want to avoid that. Then……)

"I am okay with this."

"Eh?"

"I am saying I won't use my 《Blaze"

"----------Uh! What do you mean by that, Tooru!?"

"I will manifest it if I need to, but I have no use for it now."

"D-Don't be stupid!! I may look like this but I am one of the top rankers in national kendo competitions!!"

"……I am not stupid. I'm serious about this."

"---------Uh! Don't regret this!! Seyaaaaaaaaaa!!"

Imari howled and stepped-in.

The flow did not stop even though I dodged.

Immediately, the 2nd and 3rd slash were released------

But, I safely avoided all of those slashes.

"Kuh……! Looks like you are good at dodging……!"

I will show her the difference in our ability and make her give up.

That was the fight I chose.

It's true the <<Lucifer>> turns humans to <<Exceed>>.

However, I am also the same when it comes to having a physical power up by the sublimation.

If that was the case then, my original abilities, skills and experience have increased too.

Imari's sword skill was quite something.

However, it was something not outside of the zone from matches.

---But, I'm different.

Ever since that day, I had been working every day to get stronger.

The path we walked was different---------and it resulted into this overwhelming difference in ability now.

“W-Why…….!”

The <<Blade>> continued to cut through the air fruitlessly and endlessly.

The difference in ability would not be filled, no matter how much spirit she has.

Immediately, Imari noticed that too and started showing impatience in her eyes.

“I can’t lose! I……I have a goal……!”

She clenched her teeth and voiced her determination of not giving up before swinging her <<Blade>>.

I dodged that attack by a *paper thin* margin, and took the chance to grab Imari's wrist when she missed.

"……You should know this already. Imari, you can't win against me. Continuing--------is useless."

"Uh!"

"So please give up. I want you to admit defeat……I don't want to hurt Imari."

There was nothing harsher than the sentence I put in my mouth.

I am telling her to admit the overwhelming difference in ability and admit defeat.

And the moment she accepted that, Imari would have to leave Kouryo Academy.

In order not to hurt Imari, I had to hurt Imari's heart and that hurt my heart too.

Just like Imari, I also have a goal.

I have to accomplish my goal.

But even so, I swung my fist to avoid hurting the girl--------- Imari.

That was why I planned to crush Imari's determination and scatter her heart to end this but-----

"Don't joke! I won't admit defeat like this. Definitely…….!"

Imari was enraged.

"Most of all, there is no way I can raise the white flag knowing that I was taken against easily!!"

"Imari……"

When I called over to her, Imari slackened her expression with a *fuu* and made a smile.

"If you want me to admit defeat, then you have to fight properly, Tooru. That is what manners are."

I was convinced after I saw that smiling face, and those eyes filled with strong determination.

Just like she claimed, she would never admit defeat of her own volition.

I am really an idiot.

There was no way I could break the heart of an opponent that had such a strong determination and smile.

---Then what should I do?

That was obvious.

There was only one skill that could respond to Imari's determination (heart).

"Sorry about that."

I gave an apology and let go of Imari's hands before taking a few steps back to create some distance.

It was not needed to *use* it, judging by the difference in ability.

But Imari wished for me to go all-out.

And I have to respond to that wish.

That was why I shouted-------the <<word that carried strength>>.

"《Blaze!!"

<<Flame>> was flowing out from my chest-----

At the same time I grabbed it, it entangled on my arm and flashed.

"That is Tooru's……..."

I was being called the <<Irregular>> and this 《Blaze was the only defensive type in this world------Imari saw the <<Shield>> and could not hide her surprise.

"Just as what you can see. So, sorry, but I am going to use----this guy to win."

I clenched my fist strongly to show it to Imari.

I pulled that fist back as if to shoot a bow and-----took a stance.

"Come at me at full strength! I will stop Imari's 《Blaze attack-----and win!"

"Looks like you are getting serious now……But! No matter how absolute the difference is, I will not give up!!"

Imari shouted and took her stance.

It looks like she was planning to challenge me to a final match with that high-offensive power thrust technique which looked very hard to dodge.

"This is regretful…… I really wanted to talk more with Tooru. But there is no time for that, as a swordsman I will use this <<Sword>> to------!"

"Tell that to this----<<Shield>>!!"

Responding to my words, Imari made a loud powerful shout.

"SEYAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!"

Piercing through the air, that tip of the sword approached me.

"OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!"

I roared and after an instant.

GaKiiiiiiin……..! The <<Shield>> stopped the blade and the <<Blade>> bounced out from Imari's hands because she was unable to withstand the collision impact.

"That----------was a good attack."

"Saying that won't make it cool since I was blocked but--------- thank you for now."

Imari made a small smile, and I------

"It's the end."

I relaxed my fist.

Just like shooting an arrow, I released the accumulated power.

And just as I claimed-------it became the match's last attack.

"Are you okay, Imari? *It didn't hit*, so I think you won't get wounded, though……."

I approached Imari who was still down, and knelt down.

"U,un. I think I'm not hurt……But, what was that just now ……?"

"It's an impact wave."

It's a technique that can easily break one or two bones if it hit but, the power was not that simple anymore now that I gained the <<Lucifer>>.

That's why by stopping immediately it would end with-------a wind pressure that was originally only strong enough to stagger someone, but, I would have never thought that its power increased into something that could send someone flying.

But even so she did not get hurt, so I made a relieved sigh.

"Seriously, you have something that amazing…… Haaa, It's my complete loss……..."

"I'm sorry……"

I extended my hand and helped Imari to stand up.

"It's okay. Even If I can't become an <<Exceed>>, it's not like all the paths have been closed off. I just have to find another path. ……So stop making that face."

Imari *pan* hit my butt to tell me to put in some spirit.

"Congratulations for enrolling, Tooru."

"……Thank you, Imari."

Although I felt sorry, I made a smile, and Imari did the same but, at that moment--------

Chirin.

Inside the auditorium filled with loud noises, the clear sound of bells grazed my ears.

When I looked over to that sound, over there was------

"Ah……"

That silver girl was standing there.

She was looking towards us------no, *towards me*.

Her red (Ruby eyes) eyes filled with a certain amount of strong determination were clearly looking at me.

But, that only occurred for an instant.

A guy came from behind and attacked his exam opponent-----the silver girl.

"----------Uh!"

The moment he swung his sword, the guy was convinced of his victory.

---But, that attack cut the air.

That's because the silver girl that was supposed to be there was not there anymore.

"Wha!? Di-disappeared……?"

It was not strange for the guy to open his eyes wide dumbfounded.

In an instant, the silver girl danced up to the sky.

Primarily, humans were weak at moving their eyes up and down.

She jumped up the moment the attack was about to reach her sights and it was done at very close-distance. If I was in his place then I might have lost her-------that was how fast she was.

“Pretty……”

Gazing at the silver girl in midair, Imari muttered.

The silver girl, holding those black bladed swords----<<Double >> in each hand looked like she had jet black wings and our hearts were taken away by that scene.

After a while of feeling that time was slowing down-----

The Angel holding those dark colored wings, crossed her swords together before landing to the ground.

Chirin, we regained our composure when he heard that sound while looking over the matter.

“She’s amazing…….”

“Aah…….”

The way she carried her body and the sword handling was not something learned in one day, but rather those movements were clearly gained from continuous training.

(Who on earth is that girl……..)

"Seriously, whether it's Tooru or that girl, only incredible people gather here. Sheesh……"

Imari made a wry smile while looking at me.

"Well then, regrets will start to pop out if I stay here like this, so it's about time I go."

There was nothing I could do about the pain in my chest when I heard that.

"Let's work hard together, Tooru. It's a promise."

"Aah, I promise."

Imari nodded to my reply satisfied and was about to leave the auditorium but------she looked back.

"Ah, I have one more last thing I want to ask. Just now you said *it didn't hit* right? Which means that it could have hit if you wanted it to, but since that did not happen then this would mean that you were holding back?"

"Uh. Tha-that is……."

Imari puffed up her cheeks a little.

"I'm ashamed……"

"Well it's okay. I'll just make it a debt."

"Debt?"

"Yes, one debt. That's why, if there comes a time where we meet again after this-------then let's see, I'll have you treat me to a cake."

"Aah, I get it. ……Things got annoying for holding back badly."

"Fufu, you get what you deserve ♪"

I made a nod while making a wry smile at Imari's lively words while she winked.

"Well then,------Bye-bye, Tooru."

Imari's words were filled with various feelings and she left the auditorium.

(I will become stronger…….)

While looking at her back, I made a vow again.

However, that was not all.

That vow was something I made when I determined my goals.

<<Power>> is needed in order to achieve my goal.

Seeking <<Power>> is my path, and that is my only choice.

(I just have to find another path, huh……)

Imari said that.

But, *those are words only the living can say*.

I remembered *that day*.

That day that made me start to seek for <<Power>>.

Finding another path------

It is impossible for the dead.

There was no other path. I couldn't afford to find a new path.

"Otoha……"

I muttered my sister's name.

The name of my deceased sister that I failed to protect.

"Why did you have to die……"

I want to know why my young sister had to be relieved of her life.

Yes, I am living for someone dead.

Part 2

The silver girl opened her eyes wide when she saw the moment of how a *battle of a certain group concluded*.

Even though it didn't hit, she knew that fist strike had tremendous power.

The moment she was learning about that impact technique, her exam opponent who only has physical strength in his mind, came from behind and attacked.

But, that also ended immediately.

She easily avoided her opponent's attack and won easily, and the silver girl looked towards that group-------Tooru's group again as they were talking there together peacefully.

That kind of group in this auditorium--------didn't look like opponents who had been fighting just a while ago, but rather they looked like close friends---------since everyone other than Tooru and Imari has left already, the girl was interested in him and that technique just now.

"Well then------Bye-bye, Tooru."

Soon, after both of them smiled and exchanged their farewells, Imari left the auditorium.

Left there, Tooru brought down his sights to his fist that ended the match, and was thinking of something.

Staring at that back, the silver girl slightly raised her eyebrows and muttered.

“Tooru…….”

Chapter 2 『I am interested in you

Part 1

Kouryou Academy------

In the northern part of Tokyo bay, there exists a reclaimed land that can only be accessed through a hanging monorail.

There are giant walls surrounding it with only one gate matching that size and a giant clock tower which could be seen soaring high to the sky from outside in the center of the vicinity.

The school building and the school dormitory inside was structured into an unfamiliar western style, and it felt a little strange to call it a school. Naturally, the interior design was similar ; Me and Tora were heading towards the classroom through the western corridor together and------

“Guh……!”

“What’s wrong?”

I leaked a small groan from the creak of my body; Tora did not let that get past him and looked towards me in doubt.

“I forced myself a little just now.”

The cause was the skill I used on Imari.

That was originally a skill that used muscles, but the reckless use of it with my middle-build body places quite a burden on my body even though it was just one shot. This skill was a double edged sword; on the one hand it holds absolute destructive power, but on the other hand I wouldn't be able to move normally if I used it twice. When I explained this to him...

“I see. So that means you're a novice huh?”

I’m astonished……..

“Don’t you have a kinder way to say it……”

“None.”

It was an immediate reply.

“Fuun. There is one question I want to ask regarding that technique; why didn’t you ever use that when you were training with me? ……Haa! Don’t tell me you were holding back when I was the opponent!?”

Tora pressed me with questions and I swung my head in panic.

“Don’t just scold me from your misunderstanding. That was something I learned just recently--------which means, it is something I acquired after I couldn’t meet Tora anymore.”

“……I see. It’s true you are not a stingy fool. …… Although you are an idiot.”

Tora made a smile but, that last part was none of his business.

(Well, I'll just agree for the time being…….)

"Forget about that, it's been a long time, Tora. I didn't think I would meet you in a place like this."

"Fuun, that's my line."

The nature regarding <<Lucifer>>----the chance of being an << Adapt>> was one in over a thousand people, I heard that during the inspection before enrolling to the school.

That is why, I didn't think I would meet him in Kouryou Academy.
here

However just like I thought in the auditorium, it was somewhat reassuring to know there was someone I knew here.

"Tooru. Just now during the entrance examination---------"

"Oh, it looks like that's the classroom."

We finished walking through the long corridor, and reached the first year's classroom.

"Oh, sorry. What were you trying to tell----"

"You over there?"

"Hn?"

Someone interrupted when I asked what Tora said.

When I looked over, there was a beautiful long haired girl staring straight at me.

(This girl……where have I--------)

In addition to her beautiful and yet cute face, she has an excellent style and felt like an adult although she was the same age as me. However, the characteristic part of her, was her atmosphere. Her figure was surrounded by a dignified air, and it emphasized her own existence.

"----------Uh! If I'm correct, you were sitting behind us during the entrance ceremony……"

Yes, the girl that was talking to me right now was the girl that warned us to keep quiet in the middle of the entrance ceremony.

"Is there anything?"

When I asked her, the girl made a slightly complicated expression.

"……No one would have thought there was such a traditional ceremony here. That's why you should not feel down, and have the intention to head straight forward in this academy. I think that is the only way to look straight at her when the time comes."

"Errr huh…….?"

"Well then, I will excuse myself."

Even though I haven't understood the meaning of those words yet, she turned back and entered the classroom.

"What was that about…….?"

"……Tooru. Your examination opponent-------- if I am correct, she was called Imari. She was saying, if you regret defeating her then work hard for her sake."

"I see, so that's what she meant……."

Maybe because she was sitting behind us, she probably looked at me and Imari talking together in a friendly manner.

That's why, she probably took consideration in me, wondering if I was depressed.

"It's okay, it's because I already promised Imari. Thanks for the consideration, Tora."

"Why are you telling me that for? Tell that to that girl."

"That's true. ----------By the way Tora, what was it that you wanted to tell me just now?"

"……I don't know. Anyways let's go in. …….. almost everything I wanted to say has already been said, how can I say that now , you idiot?"

"A,aah……."

I followed after Tora who suddenly turned moody for some reason, and entered the classroom.

When I entered, the desks lined up in the room were not those personal use tables used in elementary and middle school tables, but instead they were ones with a wide width and were meant for 2 people to use.

We picked random empty seats nearby the entrance----------I thought sitting at the side was strange so, I decided to just sit at the back and wait for the HR (homeroom) to start.

All the new students had not assembled in the room yet----------it seemed a portion of the students were injured physically during the entrance exam and were in the middle of medical treatment-----so, there was still time before things started.

The others did the same thing as us and sat somewhere random, there were some girls talking with others sitting nearby or guys who were sleeping already, everyone was doing everything as they pleased and were waiting for the HR to start.

But, because of a certain person showing up in the classroom, a commotion occurred and------

Next, everyone lost their words.

"What is it?"

Towards the same situation similar to the one during just before the entrance ceremony starting, we looked towards the person standing at the entrance------

"That girl……..."

We immediately understood.

The person that got the class's attention was that silver girl.

"Do you know her?"

"No, it's not like we know each other but……."

Now that I think about it, Tora was sleeping when the girl showed herself in the auditorium.

"I saw her movements during the entrance exam, the way she carried her body and her swordsmanship was quite something I think."

"Hou……. That's one interesting girl."

He made a fearless smile and looked like he was going to challenge her to match.

(This guy is still the same hot-blooded fellow…….)

After thinking that, I once again set my eyes back on the silver girl.

Same like what she did at the auditorium, she did not care about the onlookers from her surroundings and was slowly looking around the classroom before--------those ruby eyes stopped at a certain spot.

On me.

(Eh……..?)

Our eyes met.

(It's just a coincidence right……..?)

And, the moment I thought that, the silver girl slightly moved her eyebrows-----

"Tooru."

……No, she said it. That was my name. There was no mistake that is my name.

(Why does she know my name…….?)

That was the first question floating in my mind.

Naturally, I had no memories of knowing any foreigners.

(……Wait a sec? I think she was looking at us in the middle of the entrance exam……)

It's not like I talked to her before, so I completely had no idea why she knew my name.

The silver girl was staring at me and started walking right when I was had many question marks popping in my head.

- Chirint* together with the sound of the bells, her silver hair was swaying near her hips while being expressionless.

It was the exact reappearance of the auditorium------The only difference was the last part.

"……"

The silver girl got right besides me and stared at me for a while before--------making a nod with her head and sat on the chair.

On the chair beside me.

Even though there were many empty seats, she purposely chose the one beside me.

What's more---------

peek……..*peek*

She was looking at me with the side peeks for some reason. She probably planned to secretly look at me but, it was completely obvious.

"……Hey, do you know her?"

"That is my line!!"

"Sorry, this situation was confusing……..."

One day, a foreigner I have never met or seen before (and naturally even her name is unknown to me) suddenly starts calling my name, sits on the seat beside me, and in addition she is conscious of me by looking at me with side peeks----------I suddenly fell into such a situation and if there is someone that wouldn't get confused of this situation then I want someone to tell me about that person.

Nonetheless, it feels uncomfortable being peeked at like that while unable to comprehend to situation.

"……He,hey, can I have a moment?"

"--------Uh!"

Chirin. The moment I made up my mind and talked to her, the silver girl turned away in tremendous speed.

"……"

It turned to silence just like that. It seems she is planning to pretend she didn't hear my call.

(There is no choice. I'll just find a good timing to talk to her later ……)

I made a small sigh, and amused myself talking with Tora about some boring stuffs.

Most of the commotion in the classroom also returned back normal when they saw us------

"……"

peek……..*peek*

After a while, she was looking at me again.

(Seriously what is going on……..)

While I was getting uncomfortable because of that, the students that had their wounds treated were entering the class one after another.

Soon, after almost all the new students had assembled------

"Hello Hello♪ Good work on the examination-- and congratulations on your enrollment to this school--!"

Suddenly, the sound of loud *Kara**Kara laughter appeared and a girl came into the classroom from the opened *window*.

The room suddenly went silent and the girl stood at the teacher's platform before striking a pose.

"Nice to meet you, I am Tsukimi Rito----♥ I am everyone's homeroom teacher, so please treat me well for one year--! Cutting the formalities, just call me Usa-sensei okay--"

Everyone in the class had no response. Rather, I should say we had no idea how to respond.

"…….Aryaryan, what's wrong?"

The self-proclaimed homeroom teacher looked around the classroom with a puzzled expression.

She drew a different kind of attention compared to the silver girl and she was too young to think that she was a teacher-------yes, most of us would agree if we were told that she was from our age generation and we would believe her to be our classmate if she wore the school uniform.

Most importantly, her outfit was the most unbelievable part after calling herself a teacher. No matter how I looked at it, she was wearing a maid uniform and with the addition of a rabbit ear hair band.

"Ha!? Are you all maybe fascinated by my cuteness? Iyaaa----, I thought I got used to these things quite well but, if all the new students are affected by it then I would be happy, awkward, and embarrassed as expected♪"

The self-proclaimed homeroom teacher placed her hands on her cheeks and was swinging her head in embarrassment but---------

"No, we were just taken aback……"

"Oh I see, you all were just taken aback--------Wait, eeeeeehhhh!! You all weren't fascinated!?"

She heard my mutter and raised a shocked voice.

"No matter how and where you see it, I don't think you will be that conveniently received though……"

"It's because everyone was staring at me quietly♪"

(Is it really okay for this person to be our homeroom teacher……)

There was no mistake, everyone in the class was thinking that at this moment.

"Tsukimi-sensei, please don't make the new students uneasy."

The one who spoke out our feelings was a male in his mid-twenties who walked into the classroom normally from the door-----it was a male named Mikuni, who played the role of the facilitator during the entrance ceremony. Looking at his tall height and well-ordered facial features, [Hou……] there were sighs leaking out (luckily the males aren't like that) from left and right.

"Aaree--? Mikuni-sensei, why are you here?"

"I am the supervisor for the new students' teacher. If you are going to play a fool then I'll have you take another side."

"It's okaaay. I plan to ride on a boat so leave it to me♪"

"You'll sink."

"Well then, let's reform ourselves and head to self-introduction shall we--"

"……"

Tsukimi-sensei completely ignored Mikuni-sensei's come-back, and started talking.

"With that said, hello hello I am Tsukimi Rito-chan. I am a young lady that has just graduated from this Kouryou academy this spring; I think I am very inexperienced but, I plan to do my very best so nice to meet you all♪"

(18 years old huh. No wonder she looks young-------wait, how about her teacher qualifications……..)

I thought that but, asking for common sense in a school devoid from common sense itself was useless.

"Tsukimi-sensei has excellent grades amongst last year graduates so she has been specially selected to be a teacher this year. Leaving that character aside, there are no shortcoming in her abilities and skills so be rest assured."

We heard the following from Mikuni-sensei, and there were sighs of relief leaking out from everywhere.

"So"Somehow there was some very hurtful things in there but, everyone don't mind that and lets progress efficiently okay----……..Although I said that since today is still the first day, it will be just a quick explanation of this year's schedule and the self-introduction"

"Before that, first off a warning regarding the 《Blaze."

"Ah, oh yeah oh yeah♪ Errrr you all must not manifest your 《Blaze without permission from the academy okay? I'll be very angry if you bring it out as you like. That's all-- Well then, let's begin the self-introductory---♪"

Thanks to Mikuni-sensei, we were safely advancing inside the first day of HR-------

Although there was another problem.

Rather than calling it a problem, I should be calling it curiosity.

That is the--------silver girl.

The girl sitting beside was sending her mysterious gaze to me as usual and this turned into a problem for me.

Stare----------.

If looks could kill people then I would have been easily killed about 100 times by now.

The students around me were in the middle of concentrating on the teacher's platform while she was the only one looking at me. She was staring quietly at me. Continuously looking.

She most likely thought she has not been noticed yet but, a gaze was something that could be found out by the latter beyond the thoughts of the user.

At any rate, I have no idea why she was this conscious of me.

(Has she mistaken me with someone else…….?)

"------u."

(But how about the name? Why does she know my name?)

"----------ming you."

(I don't get it!)

"You, the one dreaming on the third row from the front! Hey you, from behind the midget boy!"

"Who's the midget!!"

"Hn?"

Thanks to Tora's shout, I noticed myself being called.

When I looked over at the teacher's platform, Tsukimi-sensei bulged her cheeks and looked at me.

“HnMou----, you finally noticed? It’s your turn.”

“My what?”

“Your self-introduction.”

“Ah……”

I could hear giggles coming from here and there in the classroom.

I felt my cheeks getting hotter when I heard that before standing up.

“Kokonoe Tooru, nice to meet you.”

“…….Kokonoe? Aah, you are that rumored boy!”

“Rumored?”

“There is a rumor in the staffroom. That there is an <<Irregular >> this year in the first year”

<<Irregular>>--------even though it was an unknown word to me, I could at least understand that it was something special.

The class started having a commotion, and I became the center of attention again.

Inside the unsettled commotion, it was now the turn of another person for attention this time.

"Well then, next. The silver hair-chan besides you stands out a lot."

"……Ja---Yes"

The silver girl nodded and started her self-introduction.

"Julie=Sigtuna. Everyone, nice to meet you."

Once again, the classroom was wrapped in commotion. …… However, the implication was different from mine.

Naturally, my treatment was close to a rare animal. As for the silver girl----------in Julie's case, unlike her foreigner girl appearance, the fluent Japanese coming from her mouth was shocking.

However, Julie as usual didn't care about the response from her surroundings and sat down.

And once again she side peeked and was looking over here----------

"--------Uh!"

Our eyes met----------and the moment I thought that, she looked away.

But after some time passed, she started peeking at me using side-wise glances again…….

Soon the student handbook, student cards and dormitory guidebooks were distributed when the self-introductions ended.

“Is it all distributed to the students huh huh? Each individual please read through the school and dorm regulations when you have time later and, if you don’t then I’ll scold you okay♪ Also, the student card is used as a credit card so please be careful not to lose it—"

“Hee, so that’s how you buy stuff……”

It would seem this was the living expenses.

The credit limit for each month was 10000 yen, and a number of people got excited after hearing that.

“Okay, okay. I understand your feelings but keep quiet---. For the last part, I will explain about the *special system* of this school and the dormitory room separation before I end today's talk, if you all want to make noise, do it then. First off, I want to talk about the special system though, it’s very important so listen to it properly---♪”

*Pan**Pan* Tsukimi-sensei clapped her hands together, and started talking about the so called special system.

"Our school exists a partner system called <<Duo>>. You all should understand from the word partner though, two people will form one group and receive lessons."

(……<<Duo>>? Just recently, I think I heard the same word from somewhere……)

And in the middle of tracing back my memories, a question [Why is that?] came out from another student, and my train of thoughts stopped when Tsukimi-sensei started answering.

"When you graduate from here, you all know about the talk that you will be attached to the organization(Dawn)'s peace preservation team right. You all will execute the missions normally in 2 in one group(two man cells) or maybe in a team with more numbers than that."

"……Even though it will probably be impossible if we are told to be active in a team immediately after graduation, so 'get used to it in our school', is that what you are implying?"

"That is exactly right. You sure get it Tachibana-san♪"

That girl that talked to me right before I entered the class replied Tsukimi-sensei with a dignified voice.

"Now then now then, it's regarding about the <<Duo>> but, just like I said just now, both of you will be doing a lot of different

types of lessons. So, regarding about that relation, I am sorry about the hurry but you will choose your official partner by the end of this weekend, so from tomorrow onwards good luck finding your partner to attend the classes. Fiiiiiight----……..ah, by any chance if you can't decide then we will pick one for you so it's okay to rest assured okay---♪"

(Partner system------<<Duo>> huh……. I'll just team up with Tora.)

"……So, the real part starts here---. Actually, after the << Duo>> is teamed up in this school, there is a rule where they will have to know each other deeply and pass time together as much as possible to strengthen their bonds together. Well----what I want to say is……you will be made to share rooms in the dorm♪"

It's true, that trust will probably be deepened if they are together for a long time.

Even though there is enough chance personality disagreements will appear, for this school that is devoid of common sense this still made sense.

(Hn, wait a sec…….?)

I had a question floating out towards that explanation.

"Err, I have a question."

"Yes yes, the <<Irregular>> Kokonoe-kun, what is it?"

……I wished you would stop calling me that way.

"You said the <<Duo>> will be decided by this *weekend* but-"

"Fufu, nice question. Sensei is happy you noticed that~♥ Should I give you a nice pat in the head?"

"I refuse."

"Puu~ that's regretful. ……..well then well then, pulling myself together and including the answer for Kokonoe-kun's question, I will start talking about the room separation for the dormitory~♪"

Chills. The instant Tsukimi-sensei showed a smiling face, a chill ran up my spine.

It's a premonition of something getting problematic.

Is that premonition by any chance-------true?

Tsukimi-sensei pointed her fingers to us, and put something worthless in her mouth.

"Until the weekend, we will have you all live with the *current person sitting next to you--*♪"

"……Hah?"

"Which means, together with the temporary <<Duo>>. This is the school rule, so denial is useless, and no no's are not permitted okay Neee, Mikuni-sensei♪"

Mikuni-sensei silently nodded and made a sigh to Tsukimi-sensei who was making an "x-sign" with her fingers in front of her chest.

"Tha,that means……."

"Good for you, Kokonoe-kun♪"

Tsukimi-sensei made a good job sign to me.

At first I didn't understand her words but, I also guessed it by that one sentence.

Until *this weekend, living together with the classmate sitting beside you* would mean--------

"Yes♪ Your roommate is that silver haired beauty Julie-chan. Male 37, female 15, that is about the number of new students but, you are the only one living together with another girl. Kyaaa---Lucky♥ ……ah, yeah yeah. You will be kicked out of school if you have an illicit sexual relationship so be careful. Putting it in easier words, if you do something that is hesitated to say in the classroom (here), and a 3rd roommate is made--------"

"Like hell I'll do thaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat!!"

Forgetting my respect to my superior, I shouted and stood up----

Immediately right after, the classmates made an uproar after they got hold of themselves from my shout.

[Are you serious!?] [With that girl huh, that's nice……..] [Kyaa---, its living together, living together.]

"Wa,wait a second! No matter if it is the school rule, thinking in common sense isn't this bad in a lot of ways!"

Inside the uproar filled with words they want to say as they like , I panicked and protested but---------

"……..do you think a school having an entrance exam during the school enrollment ceremony, and what's more conducted a real fight is normal?"

"……."

The reply that came back, made my view in front dizzy.

I placed both my hands on the table, and looked over to my roommate until the weekend------and my eyes met with her ruby eyes again.

But this time she didn't avert her eyes away----------

She looked towards me and lowered her head a little.

"Nice to meet you."

"Ni,nice to meet you……"

This was, the start of the cohabitation with me and the Julie silver girl.

(Someone save me……)

The reason why I wished that was simple and clear, it's because this was a complicated and yet inescapable problem.

Few hours passed from the uproar in the classroom.

After we were told about the dorm rules (Curfew and time for eating), we moved to the dormitory in the area and, was led straight to the cafeteria to quickly finish our dinner; right after that ------

Inside the room assigned, I was------standing there and staring with the silver girl, Julie.

Silently.

(Please. Someone save me…….)

Even though I wished once more, a hero who will break this situation wouldn't appear.

Would Tora who was assigned to the room next door, unexpectedly come here to play I wonder.

…….however even when I made such a light hope, it dispersed after hearing the slight shouting coming from the other side of the thick wall.

(Looks like he is not getting along with his roommate)

However right now, I have a problematic situation I raised myself instead of the room next door.

Stare----------.

(This is a problem……..)

No progress will be made if I kept silent even though I was thinking what to do, I then made a sigh and looked at Julie.

(Now that I take a good look at her, she does look like a bisque doll.)

Having a delicate body structure, well-featured face, transparent snow (Snow White) colored skin, ruby eyes, and the most characteristic part I have to say about her was her silver (Silver blonde) hair…….

All of it was harmonized together, and it was suitable to be called beautiful.

The word beautiful girl is probably meant to be used for this.

But, that was not all.

A black wing angel--------

Judging by the way how she uses those two small swords and how she magnificently she carries her body, she was not a normal girl.

(Where did she get such a skill----------wait, now is not the time to think about that)

First off I have to do something about this silence but……..

If I were to make a self-analysis, I think my communication skills are quite okay thanks to living in a house with a large number of people coming and going. I had quite some male friends in my elementary and middle school time.

But expected to the girl I just met today.....what's more a foreigner, adding on I will be sleeping in the same room (important) together with her under the same roof until the weekend (currently Monday), on top of me being unable to read her thoughts (this is more important) because she was expressionless, I was in front of someone who one-sidedly knows about me, and I have no idea what I should be talking with her.

(Otoha was the only one I have a talking experience with a girl my age…….)

…….I feel that a sister won't be a reference in the first place .

(Let's play it safe.....)

"Err, hey……..we are going to be living in the same room until the weekend so, why don't we sit down for now?"

"Ja--
Yes"

After she nodded to my proposal, the silver girl interpose the low table and made a proper seiza.[1b 1]

(Ooh, she is well mannered……however, I think I heard foreigners are bad with seizas but, is that not the case?)

"-------?"

"Ah, sorry."

Julie tilted her small head because I was standing up thinking even though I was the one who said to sit down.

I apologized and hurried to sit down straight on the other side of the table.

"This is quite a nice room."

The room dormitory was unexpectedly wide, and beautiful. There was a carpet on the center of the floor; it was equipped with a television and kitchen, and maybe because it was meant for 2 people since there was two same types of clothing cases, and a two stories bed was installed.

Oh yeah.

"Errr……..lets introduce ourselves again."

"Ja—"

"Well then, starting from me who proposed this. I am------"

"Tooru."

"A,aah……..."

Before I could name myself, my name was said before me.

I was a little curious about why the accent was a little different but, since she is a foreigner so that can't be helped.

"Rather than Kokonoe or Tooru, just call me in any way easy for you."[1b 2]

"I understand. Then I will call you Tooru."

"You are Julie, is that okay?"

"Ja---.Julie=Sigtuna. Please call me Julie."

"I, I understand……..."

Same like in the classroom, I was bewildered when she replied back in fluent Japanese.

(It's better than unable to communicate…….)

"Please take care of me until the weekend, Julie."

"Ja---"

Self-introduction time over.

"[……..]"

And once again silence arrived.

(Uh wait, isn't it bad to end it here!)

"Le,lets talk about each other more okay?"

"Ja---"

"Errr, I am born from Kanagawa prefecture in Fujisawa city. ……wait, do you know where is Fujisawa?"

"Nai, and I don't know about Kanagawa……."

Julie swings her head a little troubled.

Because she was able to talk in fluent Japanese, I thought she might be brought up in Japan but, the probability of it being wrong is high since she doesn't know where Kanagawa is.

"Err, Fujisawa is a city in the southeast coastland from here……that's too vague huh. Where is Julie from?"

"It's a country called Gimle in the northern Europe."

"An overseas student like I guessed……. But even so, your Japanese is good."

"Thank you very much. I was properly taught by mama."

"From your mother……?"

Was she working in a Japanese company or something?

……..she might unexpectedly be a Japan lover--------of things like ninja or anime--------there is that possibility.

In a more unexpected case, she might be a half.

She doesn't look like she has Orient blood mixed but, actually could her name Julie written in kanji be Julie or Julie or Julie or Julie[1b 3]--------

"Mama interpreted it from her job."

It was a normal answer…….

"And in the school at that side, there was Japanese in the selection of subjects."

"Hee, then you have been deciding to study abroad in Japan since middle school?"

"Ja--.I found out about this academy, and decided it."

"I see……"

Why would you come to this Battle training school----------was what I wanted to ask but, I might be stepping too far in at the beginning so I restrained myself.

"I see. For an instant, I thought you would be a half."

"-------?"

"Since Japanese people also have the name Julie, I thought that might be the case."

"I see. But speaking of names, the name Tooru is also in Gimle."

"Is that so?"

"Ja---. It is a name named after the strongest thunder god that appears inside the legends told in Northern Europe."

"Thunder god Thor……"

The reason why the accent was different was because; she confused mine with the name of that god.

However------

(Strong, huh……..it would be nice if that is the case though ……)

Hearing that keyword *I remembered that word*, and unintentionally clenched my fist.

"Tooru?"

"Ah……! Errr no, it's great Julie can speak Japanese. Since I can only speak in Japanese."

"Did you not learn foreign languages in Japan's middle school (junior high school)?"

"Uh……..! Eng-English was required though……."

There are many people that can't have a conversation even if they were taught.

And I am in one of those large majorities.

"I'm sorry."

"……."

She guessed it and apologized, somehow I feel a little miserable …….

"N-no, but I am seriously thankful that my words can get through. If Julie couldn't speak Japanese then, we'll be having trouble trying to understand each other by now, I seriously think it 's great."

"Ja--. You're welcome."

Julie nodded.

(Any other topics…….wait, oh yeah!)

"By the way, I saw Julie's fight during the entrance examination but, the way you bring your body and sword handling is amazing. Did you attend a dojo in Gimle?"

"……Nai. That is my own style."

"Self-taught and that movement…….. That's amazing……. "

The moment I felt surprise about the hidden sword talent inside her small body-------

I want to have a match with her sooner or later, that's what I thought.

"Ah, Tooru. I want to change the topic but-------"

"Hn?"

"Is it okay if I take a shower first?"

"Eh? A,aah. I don't mind."

"Thank you very much. I still want to talk but, I feel really sleepy from just now because of the time difference……..I am sorry but, after I wash my sweat off it's about time I am going to rest for today."

"Time difference looks tough. And what's more there was that Qualification Ceremony
That kind of thing
today. Just take a nice rest after you freshen up."

And even when I said that, Julie was wobbling her head left and right.

"Nai. It's not because of the entrance examination, it's just hot."

"Eh? Its true today was warm but, it isn't that hot……."

The season just recently turned to spring, and it was still cold now that it turned to night time.

Even though the dormitory was warm thanks to the heat equipment, it was still far away to be called hot.

"This heat is the same as summer in my country."

"I-is that so……. Then, should I leave the air-conditioner off?"

"That will be helpful."

(If she says the season right now is hot, then what will happen if it turns mid-summer…..?)

Staring at her small back while she was preparing her clothes, that question popped up in me.

"Ah, oh yeah. To avoid a strange trouble, can you do your changing in the dressing room?"

Due to us living together with the opposite sex, I made a plan to block the first point that is most likely to be the first problem.

"Ja--. I understand. Then I'll be using the shower first."

Julie took a bow after agreeing to my plan, and entered the dressing room.

The remaining me, was remembering the conversation we had just now that was bothering me.

It was thinking about her in the classroom--------no, since that time I saw Julie in the entrance ceremony.

(She doesn't smile……)

There was not a lot of it but, she has shown other expressions other than that.

Thanks to that, it was hard to read her emotions and I could not cancel the image of Julie being an exquisite doll.

In reality I knew that was not true judging by her initiative to start a conversation stead of just replying to my questions.

That is why, I thought of it.

That, she will look cuter if she smiles.

"Well then……I'll just sort out my luggage I guess."

Muttering to myself, I decided to start sorting out my luggage that was sent to the dormitory beforehand.

(This luggage would have been sent back if I failed in the entrance exam)

"------Entrance exam, huh……"

I remembered the girl I defeated and muttered.

(If I meet her someday, then I'll have to protect my promise……)

"Ah……."

When I was remembering the things in the entrance exam, I remembered something now of all times.

(Snap. If I brought up the entrance examination talk, I could have asked her why she was staring at me. And things like, how does she knows my name or, the things I was bothered about in the classroom……..)

I was probably that nervous to forget all that, and didn't realize it.

(I'll ask Julie after she finishes her shower.)

Shower.

From that word, I imagined.

……The scene Julie cleaning herself in the shower.

"-------Uh!!"

Even when I delete my imagination in a hurry, I start to feel conscious about the fact I was living together with a girl after so late.

And what's more unluckily, the sound of the shower was slightly echoing through the wall and I imagined again whether I liked it or not--------

"Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!"

I quickly took the television remote with my hand.

Even though it is until the weekend, in a way I once again became self-aware about the start of troubling days……..

"Fuwaa……"

When I was sorting out my luggage while turning on the television 20 minutes after that, Julie's yawn could be heard from behind. Just like what came out from her mouth, she was sleepy because of the time-lag.

"Julie. I have a question but-------Bufuu!?"

But, when I wanted to clear up the question before sleeping----------I turned around and Julie's sleepy eyes were there.

However that was not the reason why I spurt out.

Long and slender white legs, thighs, calf consequently entered my view.

Her thin pajamas was sticking to her skin after a bath and in just one glance I could see her delicate body line and chest bulge (it was quite moderate), on top of that, maybe because she was sleepy because the buttons that were messed up made a gap and thanks to that I don't know where I should place my eyes.

"What is wrong?"

"N-no that's……."

Despite being flustered I tried talking but, my eyes were attracted to her thighs and pajama's border for some reason.

"-------?"

"The-there is a question I want to ask…….!"

Towards Julie who was looking at me wondering, I used a little strengthened tone to trick myself-----no, I decided to ask her about the things that were bothering me.

"Julie,--------do you know me? You were facing your sights towards us during the middle of the exam and you said my name

when you entered the classroom……and you were a little curious after that right?"

"……..."

Her expression did not change. But the moment I questioned her, I felt the atmosphere slightly changed.

"……I heard your name during the examination."

It means she heard me and Imari's conversation.

"But, why me……..?"

"…….. I----------"

A slight silence slipped in and she showed a little confused state before------Julie opened her mouth.

"I am interested in you."

"Eh……..!?"

When I looked at Julie in shock, those ruby eyes looked straight at me.

"Tooru. I am very interested in you."

Julie put a very devastating sentence in her mouth and slowly came closer.

As for me, I backed away and immediately hit the wall.

And the distance between became so small that if I were to stretch out my hand I can touch----------no, Julie's breathe was hitting my chest.

"That is why------please teach me……"

"Ju,Julie……?"

Due to her just coming out from the bath, her snow white skin was weltered with blood.

To that color that feels warm from the blood passing through, it makes me feel she is human instead of a doll----------and more importantly, it makes me conscious of her as a girl.

Is this perhaps--------

(Is this that love at first sight thing……!?)

I think that it wasn't a smart thought but, as long as she said she was interested in me and daringly approaching me like this, there is no way I can not understand that meaning.

(Thi,this cute girl, to me!? Is this a dream!? No what is with this nice smell, shower? Uwah, close, her hair is thin, eh-eh-eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeh!? Wha, what should I doooooooooo !?)

The inside of my head was in complete panic. That current me was------

"Please, Tooru."

Zui Julie closed in to my face.

Her wet oddly seductive silver blonde hair, and her captivating tinged red small lips made my heartbeat pound hard--------

When I thought the deep red eyes slightly narrowed, she took a pose as if to pull a bow----------

"Heh?"

She placed the fist she pulled away, close to my stomach.

"Please teach me this."

"Th-this is……"

"It is the technique Tooru used in the exam. I was really interested in it so, if it is okay with Tooru, could you please teach me a lot regarding it……."

(So that is what she meant!!)

At the same time with me shouting my inner thoughts, I thank myself for not saying any misunderstanding words and taking weird actions before making a relieved sigh.

"Tooru?"

"Ah…....e,errr…….sorry, I can't teach you that. That technique' s burden is not normal so if Julie's small physique performs that, your body will only break. That's why……"

"……That is a disappointment."

She lowered her eyebrows, and turned disappointed from what I can see, and I felt more sorry.

"Very disappointing……"

Julie who muttered that one more time------

"Ju,Julie!?"

She collapsed, and *clings onto me*.

"Uwaaah!?"

Even after I hurry and stop her clinging onto me, I was surprised by her slenderness; I felt surprised for the second time finding out it was slender yet soft, and last off I felt surprised for the third time at the nice smell coming from her after her bath.

"#$!@#%!#-------!?"

(Wha-wha-what happened, hugging me, nice smell, from the shock!? Eeeeeeeeeh!?)

"Ju-Ju-Ju-Julie!? Wai, suddenly, no, this is-------wait, eh……?"

"Kuh--------"

I noticed her peaceful sleep breathing and regained myself.

It looks like Julie reached her limits and fell asleep.

The reason why she narrowed her eyes was because she simply just wanted to sleep.

Staring at that face, I made a large sigh mixed with tiredness and relief in it.

(I'll let her sleep on the bed for now……..)

"She's light……"

Since nothing is going to happen as expected and I cannot bring myself to wake her up, I carried Julie and got surprised by how light she was.

It looks like I might break her small delicate body if I hold her tightly.

Silky hair, small lips, and slightly drifting scent------looking at her like this, she only looked like a bisque doll, but the body warmth transmitted to me makes me strongly conscious that she is a human.

And, at that moment.

"Hn……..?"

Julie slightly rolled her held body, and brought her body closer, she grabbed my shirt tightly as if she wanted to be spoiled.

……..but, that was wrong. It's not like she wanted to be spoiled.

"Papa……"

Together with her soft mumbling, a drop of tears appeared at the edge of her closed eyelids.

Looking at that drop, I noticed my insensitivity after so late.

(As expected she's lonely……)

I don't know what reasons she study abroad for but, there is no way a young girl far from her familiar country, and coming to this far side of the east alone would not feel anxious.

I felt miserable not noticing such an obvious fact, because she was able to speak fluent Japanese and doesn't show her emotions.

And now that I have found out her true feelings, I could not pretend that I didn't see that. That's why I-------I made a vow that I wanted to become Julie's power to support her before scooping the drop of tear from her eyes.

The sky was spread out.

In that never ending sky, there was the scorching hot sun shining down.

But all of that lost its color and like an old movie, a monochrome was created.

This is a dream. Right now I am seeing a dream.

I have seen this many times, the *damn memory* I never want to remember.

(Stop it…….don't show me this again……..)

But, even when I wanted it to stop it didn't.

It was the past, just like how many times that happened; I was walking towards the same dojo.

"----------?"

Mid-way, I stopped my legs.

A stinky smell, a wind that stinks of rusted iron passed by.

Even when I turned to that stink, there was nothing there.

But-------

"----------uh!!"

Immediately a chill came, and I started running in the next moment as if I was repelled.

Running towards the dojo while shouting my sisters name----------and then I saw it.

The only color inside this grey world-------red.

Crimson flames were raging and were drowning the dojo I was familiar with.

Towards the sudden unrealistic scenery, I was standing still dumbfounded------

"Oto,ha…… Otohaa…….!!"

My sister passed by my mind, and the moment I gained back myself, I dashed into the flames.

The inside was something from hell.

Powders of flames were rising and the sound of flames bursting violently hurt my ears.

Thunderous roars sounded, and the burnt down wood blocked the single path.

But even so I headed to the deep, the flames licked my cheeks and the heat burns my lungs.

All 4 sides were dyed in red, and inside the place where it was hard to open my eyes, I called out to Otoha's name several times----

Soon I reached it.

In the blazing hell fire, the deepest part of that hell.

Over there----Otoha was there.

Together with *that person*.

Inside the sea of fire, Otoha was blankly sitting down hard and that person was holding a sword, facing backwards towards me.

The black shadows collapsed in the surroundings--------were once people called my seniors.

The blade drenched by red blood had its color further emphasized by the flames, and inside the nauseating stink of burnt meat and fat, I forgot about the situation and shouted.

"What……..Oi!! What happened!! What on earth is this!!"

"Onii,chan……"

And then, that person slowly turned over.

That person's eye at that time, I will never forget about it.

Deep, quiet, dark-------pure black eyes.

Facing that eye straight towards me, that person came closer to me.

"I am asking what happened!? Answer me!!"

"What…….? Oh let's see-----"

In response to my question, that person replied.

And that word became my goal.

"They are dead, because they were weak."

That person slowly raised the tip of the blade towards the heaven--------and the moment that was swung down at me.

"Onii-chan……!!"

The blade path, cut into Otoha.

A splash flew out.

Red, a red splash.

After an instant, I understood that meaning----------

I raised a shout painted with rage, resentment, and despair.

"----------!!"

Almost in the same time with me opening my eyes from the shout I made from the ongoing dream-------

"Tooru!?"

"Eh……..?"

When I looked over to the unfamiliar tone calling me, the ruby eyes were staring at me.

"Are you okay, Tooru?"

"Ah……..Juli,e……."

(……this is Kouryou's dormitory……)

And I finally understood where I was.

At the same time, Julie was still staring at me with a perplexed state.

"Sorry to scare you, I was half-asleep. Perhaps I woke you up?"

"Nai. I was already awake so do not mind it……I was a little surprised that's all."

"I see, then that's good……no well, actually I saw a dream of me being attacked by zombies. I was then cornered and when I let out a sharp shout then it came out in reality……haha, it's a nuisance huh?"

Although I thought I sucked at lying even for me, I kept on talking about stuff that I was never asked of.

But even so-----

(Again that dream……)

Ever since that day, I have seen that nightmare many times-------but was undoubtedly something that has passed.

From that unforgettable and never must be forgotten memories, my back was wet from sweat.

"……Tooru, what's wrong?"

Maybe I was making a stiff expression; Julie was looking at me worried.

"No, nothing. ……and, its morning already. I'll take a fast shower so, let's go eat something after that."

It was a little too frank but, I turned my face away to trick her and headed towards the dressing room without hearing Julie's reply.

I started taking a shower, and the flowing hot water washed of the cold sweat.

My body started getting warm and it gave me the actual feelings I am alive.

On that, I was the only one alive.

"Otoha……."

That day, my companions in the dojo died.

My precious sister, Otoha covered for me and……..

"They are dead, because they were weak"

More than 1 year has passed from then, and I couldn't understand those words.

That's why; I continuously seek for <<Power>>.

In order to understand those words.

Part 2

In Julie's memories, the part where Tooru was answering regarding the technique was interrupted.

What she remembers was, a feeling of warmth wrapping around her in her half-asleep half-awake state.

With a pleasant feeling like riding on a moving cradle, it was something very nostalgic.

And that nostalgia was the old memories of her father.

It is about the time when she was young, and during the time when Julie stayed up late and ended up sleeping, her father would carry her and bring her to her bed.

(I have shown you something embarrassing…….)

As long as she has no memories of how she entered the bed last night, there was only one thing that comes to mind.

Her cheeks blushed because she was shy, and Julie once again remembered the warmth from last night-------

And so, she felt loneliness.

"Papa……..."

Chapter 3 『Punch me!!

Part 1

The morning of the 2nd day after enrollment. We went to the cafeteria and--------rather than that, there were many sights gathered on Julie.

(That's because she stands out……..)

There was attention gathered not only from the 1st years but also the 2nd and 3rd but, naturally Julie was calm and walking in the cafeteria not bothered by them.

I was walking right behind her like a servant but, [Silver hair……] [Male female living together] a part of these whispering conversations from the surroundings entered my ears.

Inside them, there was one word mixed in that caught my attention.

"<<Irregular>>"

Which means, it looks like I am a topic material too.

(The combination of the foreign beauty and the so called << Irregular>> would be a rumor whether I like it or not.)

Nonetheless, I can't do anything even when I worry about it and as long as there are no problems I'll just remain open.

"Julie. What are you choosing?"

"I'm thinking of having buffet."

"I wonder what I should pick……"

It looks like there are 3 forms of choices In Kouryou Academy's cafeteria, the meat main is in set A, fish main is in set B and the pick all you want buffet with 50 different types of Japanese, Chinese and Western cuisines. The set meals were combinations of nutritional control thought of and made by the cafeteria's Obaa-chan[1c 1] but, the free picking buffet looks popular and a big portion of the students were putting on foods of their choices on their plate.

(I'll go with buffet then)

Julie was already holding a plate on her hands and was looking around at the cuisines; I did the same and started picking my food.

……primarily meat.

First off I'll pick 4 of my favorite fried chickens. Following with pork poured with sweet vinegar, stir-fried black pepper beef, and tomato beef-stock stew---------

"……Why is your choice picking so bad in balance?"

Suddenly a given up voice came calling out to me from my side.

If I remember correctly, she was that girl that sat behind my seat during the entrance ceremony and she was staring at me with those eyes filled with strong determination--------not that, she was looking at the tray I was holding.

"If I am correct……..you are, Tachibana right?"

"That is correct. Good morning, Kokonoe."

"Aah, good mor-------"

"By the way, I said this just now but, why is your combination so thoughtless of balance? From what I saw just now it was just, meat, meat, meat. Are you planning to eat meat only? No matter how free you are to pick in a buffet, there are limits to everything."

When I thought my reply greeting was interrupted, Tachibana started lecturing me for some reason.

(No, it's true that only meat is bad for balance but……)

But even so, I feel others have no right to be complaining----- and when I was thinking that, my plate was taken away from me.

"Fumu……..I can't do anything with the food that was already put on, what's next is to think as balanced as possible, this and this……..next would be, having this is good"

(Egg-eggplant was put on…….)

It was rank number 2 in the food I hate.

"Oh yes, celery was over there if I remember."

…….My firm number 1 was put on.

"Okay, this should be okay."

After a while, Tachibana made a satisfied smile before giving me back the plate that has various vegetables and fish put on it.

"Tha,thank you…….. I am totally not happy about the celery, rather how should I say this, I don't really like it though……"

"That's called hating before eating."

I am still bad with it after eating though.

"Well then, I will go take my morning breakfast."

Just like this, Tachibana said what she wanted, did what she wanted and left.

(……I'll just ask Julie to save me……..)

While praying for Julie not to hate eggplants and celery, I sat beside her who was already sitting down.

"Hey Julie. I have a favor but……."

"What is it?"

"Actually, I want you to eat celery and eggplant-------"

And it was at that time when I said until there.

Gataa that sound sounded, and there was a girl sitting on the opposite side of the table.

It was Tachibana.

“While we are at it, I will be eating over here.”

I, am dead……

“Good morning, Julie. Did you sleep properly last night?”

“Good morning.”

Even after Julie replied she slept properly, she then looked towards me with a puzzled expression later.

Most likely, she doesn’t know who that person was.

Since she was looking at me the whole time during the self-introductory, if I say it can’t be helped then, it can’t be helped.

“I am Tachibana Tomoe. I am a new student same as you and Kokonoe-------which means I am your classmate.”

“Is that so. I apologize, Tomoe.”

“Fufu, I don’t really mind. Yesterday was the first day after enrollment, and what’s more there should be a lot of confusion after that examination.”

Tachibana's cheeks slightly relaxed. I thought it was a little unexpected for her to make such an expression when she has that dignified atmosphere around her.

"By the way Tooru. What was the request you asked for?"

"…….No, nothing."

"------?"

Julie tilted her head in wonder, and *Chirin* the sound of a bell appeared.

For Tachibana, she was sending her sights towards a girl receiving a set meal from the cafeteria's obaa-chan.

"Mu……sorry, can I call my roommate here?"

"Aah, I don't mind."

"Thank you……Miyabi, over here."

After Tachibana raised her hands and called out to her, that girl came over.

"Yo,you were over here, Tomoe-chan."

"Haa……..I told you many times you don't have to call me by honorifics, Miyabi."

"Bu,but Tomoe-chan is Tomoe-chan so……."

"Seriously, you……Oh, sorry. She is my roommate Miyabi."

"Eh? Ah……..!? Go,good morning, I am Hotaka Miyabi……."

The girl called Hotaka lowered her head in panic when she noticed us; she had quite a small body and average height contrastive to the adult-like Tachibana, and has young facial features. Her evenly cut hair only has the back part growing, and thanks to that it turned into a single point because the collected parts were brought forward.

However most importantly, the one that attracts the eyes were her bulges of her abundant chest, it was bigger than the quite stylish Tachibana. Towards Hotaka, Julie first named herself then followed by me---------

"Ah…….u,un, nice to meet you……."

Hotaka blushed, and lowered her sights before shrinking.

"What's wrong, Miyabi?"

"I, I, err……fro,from a girl school so err……."

Tachibana asked, and Hotaka who was giving glances at me answered.

"I see, you are bad with males. …….it's okay, it's not like Kokonoe will bite."

Am I being treated like a dog…….

“Rea,really……..?”

Hotaka hesitantly looked at me. It’s troubling I was recognized like that but, if I don’t answer her, she would be cautious of me so I nodded.

“Anyways, just sit down Miyabi.”

“U,un…….”

The moment Hotaka sat on the chair, her large breast shook, and my male eyes looked at it by reflex.

What’s more, *it was placed on top of the table* after she sat down, there is no choice to be conscious about it whether I like it or not.

“…….What’s wrong, Kokonoe? Your face is a little red, did you catch a cold?”

“Eh? I,is that so? Today might be quite hot. Hahaha…….”

“For me, I am a little chilly……”

“I, I am normal I think…….”

“……..ma,maybe it’s because I am sensitive to heat?”

“I think it is a little hot for me too.”

Over here, a life saving ship came from Julie who was from a cold country. Even if she did not actually meant to do so, it looks like Tachibana agreed and to me it became a help from the heavens .

“Now that the chatting turned random, it’s about time we eat.”

“Aah, that’s……..tru,e……”

In the middle of nodding, I noticed-------the reality of------ eggplant and celery, my face turned stiff.

…….in the end, I washed it all off with coffee.

“Hey Julie, Kokonoe. I have something to discuss----“

Soon, we finished having our morning breakfast, and when things calmed down, Tachibana brought out a proposal.

“If it is okay with you two, why don’t we have meals together like this from now on?”

“Aah, I don’t mind.”

“Ja--. Me too.”

“Then please take care of me.”

“Ple,please take care of me……..”

(……..this is a life saver)

While looking at Tachibana and Hotaka making a smile at our replies, I thought that inside.

The reason was simple--------just like the response we saw when we entered the cafeteria, Julie and I together stands out. Even individually as long as we hold reasons to stand out, when it comes to the only male and female living together in the whole school, there might be people appearing because they are curiously suspicious.

That's why if I show them the image of Julie passing time together with other girls, I think they would most likely give better impressions.

That and now that she has to find a <<Duo>> partner until this weekend, it is better if Julie has more chances to talk with more girls.

"By the way Julie. Err……..I feel sorry to say this in front of Kokonoe but, even if it is until the weekend, are you okay living together?"

"Ja--. It is okay."

"I see. If you say so then it's okay……"

After saying that, this time she looked towards me------

"Kokonoe. I am sorry if I ruined your mood. I think this is none of my business but, because you two are a boy and girl at the same age, I was worried if problems would happen……."

While making a cough, Tachibana's cheeks slightly blushed probably because she imagined those so called problems.

"No, it's okay. It's only natural to think that way."

"If that is the case……..however, you can tell me anytime if there are any problems. If there is a need for it, I don't mind having her living in our room in secret. Right? Miyabi"

"Ah……U,un. We welcome you, Julie-chan."

"I am thankful for the consideration……..but it really is okay, Tooru is a kind person."

"O-oh I see."

Julie nodded and continued talking.

"Last night, Tooru *gently held me* when I fell asleep earlier."

……..and explosive remark.

"[[Buu!?]]"

Miso soup spurt out x2……Hotaka spurt out milk.

[Ju,Julie!?] [Wha,whawha!?] [JuJuJu, Julie-chan!?]

"----------?"

In front of 3 of us who were trembling violently, *Chirin* the sound of a bell rang and Julie tilted her small head.

"Tachibana, Hotaka! That just now was------"

And when I was about to tell the real meaning of those words just now--------

"Ko,Kokonoe!! Wha-what what the heck have you done!! And what's more, It is someone who was sle-sleeping you know!? It is unpleasant to sit together with such a shameless man any more than this!! I'll excuse myself here!!"

Tachibana, who took Julie's words *at that direction*, left the cafeteria in rage.

"Ah, Tomoe-chan!? Eh, errr……."

Hotaka, who also misunderstood, face turned completely red and faced us and Tachibana's back alternately----------

"I, I'm sorry!! Wai, wait for me Tomoe-cha~~~~~n!!"

After she took a bow filled with energy, she then chased after Tachibana just like that.

We were left behind and, the situation once again turned to us being the center of attention due to that commotion.

"…….Noisy. What are you all doing?"

"Well a little something……"

Towards Tora who appeared here, I was thinking about how things became annoying while making a sigh.

"Fuun, how stupid."

"Don't say that……..."

We waited for Tora to finish his morning breakfast, and we headed to the classroom.

I was asked again about the commotion just now, so when I replied to him this time, he was fed up.

"……..did I make a mistake in my reply just now?"

Like usual, Julie did not notice the meaning of her explosive remark and tilted her small head.

Tora made a sight saying "go on and tell her", although I was unwilling to do so but I decided to go ahead.

"From the way you put it just now, it's like I……did something per-perverted to Julie."

"-------?"

"Tha-that's why I said, the word holding in Japanese has the same meaning of a male and female…….co-couples doing night activities."

"……is that so, this is a problem."

Luckily it looks like she has that knowledge in her and Julie finally swallowed the circumstances.

Her expression was still the same but, her cheeks were blushing slightly.

"I will go tell Tomoe it is a misunderstanding."

"A,aah. I'm counting on you……."

Looking at her state, it looks like she won't be lending her ears to me, so it's probably best to leave it to Julie here.

(YareYare……it would be nice if the misunderstanding would clear out quickly…….)

"Well well, okay then we will be starting the memorable first lesson—♪"

Even in the morning, Tsukimi-sensei was in high-tension and announced the start of the class with both her hands spread out.

Regarding about the matter with Tachibana--------honestly, I have no idea.

It's true that Julie told her something but……..

According to what Julie said [its okay now] but, *is it really okay*?

The reason for my doubt was clear and simple.

Stare----------.

Just like yesterday, a sight was directed at me.

But the owner of the sender was Tachibana.

2 days continuously, and what's more from a different girl----------just listening to this, there might be some envious people out there.

However, as long as I know that those sights aren't in a sentimental way, being the targeted side I am not happy at all.

(Julie……..if *it is okay now*, then why is Tachibana giving me a stare…….)

As expected, I am not that much of an optimist to accept these words in this situation.

In the end, instead of leaving it to Julie, I have no choice but to fix the misunderstanding by myself.

"----------with that said, the power up from <<Lucifer>> is something like multiplication so, the more you strengthen your body with training the higher the results will become---.Is everything until here okay?"

Speaking of lessons, since this was the first day, it will be regarding the <<Lucifer>>.

Yesterday towards Tsukimi-sensei who I had insecurities with, turned into a figure that can teach quite well.

(Well she was specially chosen from the graduated students.)

Forget about her personality, it seems the talk about no need to worry of her skills and ability was not a lie.

……..however, today too she was wearing a rabbit ear hairband and maid uniform, clothes that are improper as a teacher.

"So, there are ranks called <<Level>> attached to the <<Lucifer >>. Because everyone just sublimated just recently so you are all < < Level 1 I >>. We will be commencing the <<The Sublimation Ceremony>> each end of semester to perform the rank up. Your < <Level>> will become your results so, if we see your rank not going up at all in an interval of one year then you will be disposed------which means expelled so you better train your body and mind daily ."

According to Tsukimi-sensei, in order to sublimate to a higher rank, it would require a very tough body and mental power, and it would seem this semester would be focusing on physical enhancement.

Not long, I stood up from my seat after the bell rang telling the class was over, and walked down straight towards the person who sent that passionate stare.

"Tachibana, can I have a moment?"

Tachibana who was called out opened her eyes wide-------

"So,sorry! I have an appointment so excuse me!!"

"Ah, Tachibana!!"

She left the classroom before I could establish my existence.

(What was that…….)

I tilted my head towards the strange attitude.

In the end, Tachibana did not come back to the classroom until a few moments before the next class started.

And during the next break Tachibana headed somewhere again, and I couldn't manage to talk to her……

(Uuun……I don't have to guess that I am being avoided……what on earth happened, Julie……)

However, even confirming once again, as expected she only replied [It is okay now. The misunderstanding is clear]……..

Pull.

"?"

I finished having my afternoon meal (Mainly meat different from morning) in the cafeteria, and was in the middle of heading back to the classroom. Suddenly, when I thought my collar was pulled, my body was pulled together with energy ------I should say I was kidnapped.

"----------Tooru?.....where did you go?"

While hearing the sound of a bell rang from far away, I tripped facing backwards and was forcefully moved.

"Uoo, Tot, tot, tot!?"

In panic, I looked over to the one who kidnapped me------

"Ta,Tachibana!? O,oi, what is it suddenly!?"

"Please keep quiet."

While I was following her, since the hand Tachibana was pulling with would not let go, I was in a messy situation with me only facing backwards and walking in order to avoid falling.

"Over here should be okay……"

Soon, when I thought we came out from the school building, Tachibana finally let go of my hands.

When I looked around the surroundings, the sight of trees and lawn edges entered my eyes.

Looks like I was brought to the back garden.

I didn't think I would be kidnapped.

"Ah,aah……..I am sorry to so suddenly, what's more in an odd way to bring you here."

"No, that is okay, so what is your business?"

"……."

When I asked her what is her business with me, Tachibana became silent.

She lowered her sights to her foot before looking back at me. After repeating that several times-------she kneeled down on the floor.

"I am very sorry about the rudeness I committed due to jumping to the wrong conclusion!! Like you can see, I wish you would forgive me!!"

What a perfect kneeling down. This was what an apology inside an apology meant.

(Wait, Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeehhhhhh!?)

First day of enrollment, I was made to live with a foreigner.

Day two of enrollment, a female classmate was kneeling down to me.

If this situation was seen by someone, then my attention level would probably increase further.

…….in a bad way.

Maybe my woman troubles are starting to appear……….

(Nononono, now is not the time to be thinking that!!)

“Ple,please stand up Tachibana! I fully understand your feelings so it’s okay, you don’t have to kneel down!!”

While confirming the surroundings for people, I urged Tachibana to stand up.

“No, this is my feeling! Even though it was a misunderstanding, this is my feeling displayed to show the punishment I placed on myself to take up such a rude attitude towards you.”

“It’s okay to not show it so please stand up!!”

“I refuse!!”

Not even for an instant, I was refused.

……I, am being apologized right?

"Eeei, then……."

"Wha…….!?"

If someone was looking from nearby, Tachibana was making a seiza composition and looking up at me.

I matched the height of my line of sight with Tachibana's.

"Wh-why are you also in seiza!!"

"When conversing with someone else, talk with our line of sights in the same level, weren't you taught that?"

"muu……that's true……"

Maybe she was taken back; Tachibana became a little bit calmer and nodded.

Looking at third person, there is for some reason a male and female performing a seiza and looking at each other in the back garden.

If someone sees this situation then, what would that person think, I left that thought process away for now.

"For now, I understand what Tachibana wants to say……….so, if you know it was a misunderstanding then, there is no need to say the things I wanted to say. So with that, let's end this matter alright."

"I can't have that happen."

"Why……"

"It's because I will not be satisfied."

Is she really apologizing to me, such a question appeared.

"Then what should I do to make you satisfied……."

"It's simple. I want to compensate the crime for insulting you."

Even if you say that, and when I asked her back what should I do------

"Punch me."

"I don't have that kind of interest though……."

"Wha,what kind of interest!! Are you a pervert!?"

"That's why I'm saying I don't have that interest."

"Ah……..tha-that's true. Sorry, I just……"

Getting enraged then depressed, how busy.

I probably guessed by the conversation we had this morning but, Tachibana is fundamentally a serious person.

That seriousness is now working as a minus point though.

"Anyway. I have no intentions to punch Tachibana."

"No please punch me! As long as I am a daughter born from a martial arts family, if I was embarrassed then I will wipe off that disgrace, and if I embarrassed someone else then I will have to receive punishment fit for it!!"

A daughter from a martial arts family----------now that she put that in her mouth, it would mean she is the type to be very worried about disgrace or pride.

(Again this turned into something annoying…….)

This problem, she probably has no intentions to end it no matter what until a form of agreement was given to her.

…….but even so, I will never go "Okay, is that so" accept it and raises my hands against a girl.

(What should I do…….)

"Okay, Kokonoe. Punch me!!"

"……. I understand, then close your eyes and grit your teeth. One shot, a hard one is coming"

"--------uh! I, I understand……okay come!"

For a while I was thinking of a way to end this situation then----------in the end, I decided to follow Tachibana's words.

Tachibana closed her eyes. While her face was stiff and nervous, there was a type of determination felt coming from it.

If not for this situation, my heart would probably be beating quickly to the development of the girl in front of me closing her eyes.

(Well, here goes……)

After making a small sigh, towards Tachibana I--------

"----------uh!!"

Peshi gave her a light flick on the forehead.

"Alright, it might be a plain method but, with this it's the end."

"Wha!? T-to end it at such a level is-------"

"Just now I said one shot, and Tachibana said she understood. This means the promise has been made. Tachibana is from a martial arts family right? Were you planning to scrap the promise away, just because you can't agree?"

"Uh…….tha-that's……."

"So with this, the matter for this morning is done."

"Bu-but……."

Trying to talk back, Tachibana was in an unsatisfied state, and towards her I once again made a sigh.

"Hey. In order to be satisfied you want me to punch you, but then you probably didn't think of what kind of feelings I would feel after that right?"

"Kokonoe……?"

"If it is a match then it is a different story but, as long as that isn 't the case then I don't want to raise my hands against a girl. If I followed what Tachibana said you would feel satisfied but, this time I won't be the one satisfied. That's why, just now was the best conciliation for me."

"Bu-but as a daughter from a martial arts family I------"

"I don't care. The first thing that comes is the fact Tachibana is a girl."

"Gir,l……."

"Well then, we should be heading back soon. We are going to have physical enhancement training in the afternoon right. We will be late if we don't hurry."

I said that and stood up------then presented my hands to Tachibana.

But, Tachibana was somewhat making a blank expression and looking up at me.

"Did your feet become numb or something?"

"Th-there is no way my feet would go numb at this level."

Fui Tachibana turned her face away while taking my hands and standing up.

"Okay, let's go."

"Yeah."

Tachibana who nodded and started walking beside me, opened her mouth around the time when we entered the school building.

"Kokonoe."

"Hnn?"

"You are……..a weird guy."

(Which part of me is weird?)

While making a sigh, I told Tachibana what I felt towards the smile she made.

"Ah. I think this side is much better than the one just now."

"This side?"

"Instead of a scowling face, I thought you look cuter with a smile."

"Whaaa!!?"

My sister-------Otoha too, she was cute when she smiled.

When I think of that, as expected I think a smile suits a girl better.

When I told Otoha that, she would often show me a bashful state.

But even so-----

"Ar,are you an idiot!? What kind of nerve do you have until you can say that with such a thing without a shy face!! Like I thought, you are a weird guy!!"

When I thought Tachibana's was shouting and her face was red for some reason, she started to walk faster.

"O-oi. What's wrong, Tachibana?"

"Shu,shut up, don't follow me!"

"No, the direction we are going is the same……."

Afternoon class--------it was the start of the first physical enhancement training so we finished changing into our gym uniform, and gathered in front of the school gate.

Although it was told to be physical enhancement, since we did not hear about the content, all of my classmates were fifty-fifty expectant and anxious about the stuff we will be made to do.

However------

"Well well well--For these few days, it will be physical enhancement so we will be having marathons--♪."

And, after Tsukimi-sensei announced that, most of the people here made a disgusted face.

Nonetheless, even if it is physical enhancement, it's true that the simplest and most efficient way was to run.

"Well, let's make it light for now. So with that said, around the academy ten te~n♪"

"……ten laps, isn't that quite a nice distance?"

"fuun, one lap is about four kilometers."

"I see……..wait, isn't that almost a full marathon?"

I became weary from Tora's reply.

Even though our physical abilities were power-upped, it was not hard to imagine how tough it would be with a distance almost similar to a full marathon.

And what's more, if the up and down in the outer surroundings of the school is tough then, the severity would be more than that.

"W-we are going to run forty kilometers……?"

Hearing me and Tora's conversation, the girl with a voluptuous chest bulge beside us--------Hotaka uneasily muttered.

"Are you perhaps bad with long distances?"

"Eh? Ah……u,un….."

For an instant, Hotaka's expression turned stiff after looking at my face…….it's a little shocking.

(She said she was bad with guys because she was from a girl school so, it can't be helped……)

"It's because I am bad with running…… I don't have any specialties though……."

After saying that with a feeble voice, Hotaka made a big sigh.

"I don't know how tough it is but, your basic physical strength should have increased from the <<Lucifer>>, isn't it okay not to think in your usual standards?"

"I,is that so…..?"

"Aah. Also she said forty kilometers was light so, doesn't this mean the distance is enough to run even for us right now? Even if you can't finish the run today, it looks like we will be made to run every day from now on so, I think you will get used to it and finish sooner or later.

"Will I get used to it…….?"

"Aah, you will definitely get used to it. I was also bad at running last time but, I naturally got stamina from running every day."

More accurately, I was made to run every day though.

I remembered the time I was a kid, and my mouth just relaxed from those missed times.

"I see……. That's true, I am already power-upped…….I,I'll work hard."

Hotaka turned somewhat positive and *Guu* gripped both her hands together tightly at her chest.

At that moment, the shape of her voluminous chest changed shape and I averted my sights unable to look forward-------

The spot I averted to had Julie there; my eyes then look at her exposed white thighs because of the gym uniform and then remembered the matter from last night.

Thanks to that, I once again moved my sights to another direction and it became an awkward situation…….

"haa…….haa, hn, haa……ha, fuhaa, haa……."

Slower than my goal by 21 minutes, Julie finished running ten rounds.

"Good work, Julie. Drink this slowly."

"Thank you……very much……."

The drink I gave her was the sports drink prepared at the goal.

After she received it, Julie slowly holds it in her mouth following what I said.

"It is…….delicious……"

"Are you okay?"

"Ja----……., it was tiring……."

(Her stamina is just like how she looks.)

Even though she can carry her body like that, because she has a petite body, it looks like she doesn't have stamina.

Nonetheless, she was 2nd place for the girls and it was quite a speed to reach the goal at 8th place in both genders.

(But even so, the blessings from the <<Lucifer>> is amazing.)

The academy surrounding roads has high up and down difference while having strong winds blowing since the earth was filled in on the surface of the sea, and it made running quite tough.

But, even though it was such a course, the time taken was around 2 hours-------thinking there isn't much difference from the full marathon's world record, it is obvious our stamina has been enhanced.

Incidentally------

"Horaa Horaa, don't lie down over there--. Moving will make the accumulated lactic acid break down faster--. With that said, stand up ."

*Pan**Pan clapping her hands together Tsukimi-sensei also ran with us but, she was faster than everyone, and what's more she ran while adding lap difference to everyone.

"As expected from a graduate student. I heard her <<Level>> is higher than us but, I didn't think the difference was this large……"

"Seriously."

The girls top Tachibana muttered and I agreed.

"……....."

"Wha,what is it?"

"No,nothing at all……..!"

She glared at me silently. When I wanted to ask her about it, * fui* she turned her face away.

(Is she still unhappy from what happened just now……)

Tachibana refused but, her mood was somewhat harmed.

(I didn't mean to say something weird to her though……)

Maybe because she is a daughter from a martial arts family that she can't show smiles, there might be that kind of weird rules.

At least, it seems it was the atmosphere of not hating me.

After that, around 30 minutes passed-------and Tsukimi-sensei suddenly announced it was after school.

"U—nn, they aren't coming back. I got bored of waiting so, todays class is over without Homeroom HR. Stand, bow, and sit down. Everyone, be careful not to be late for tomorrow. Bye-bye♪"

The homeroom teacher that looks like an innocent picture was swinging her hands towards us who were dumbfounded while going back to the school building.

"Ho,how irresponsible…..…..."

"Fuun, seriously. It's true that her abilities has no problems but, her personality is too much of a problem."

Tora was fed up and nodded back, and looked towards the course we were running just now.

There were 2 people able to be seen from far away but, there was no one else behind them.

And among the people who have not yet come back, Hotaka who said she was bad with long distance was included.

(I wonder if she is okay, that Hotaka……..)

Halfway I chased passed her 3 times but, the last time I saw her, she was walking.

Although I did call out to her but, I think it was quite weird whether it reached her or not.

---in the end, when Hotaka returned it was already dusk and she collapsed from fatigue as soon she reached goal.

Then today's night time, Hotaka was still downed so her figure was missing in her seat during dinner time-------

During that occasion, there were two classmates who I have not matched their face and names together yet, I have heard they got a report of dropping out, and I was curious if Hotaka was okay.

"Uh……"

After coming out from the bath, Julie made a seiza and stared at the television.

Heading into shower before me, Julie was in the upper half body pajamas like yesterday night.

Her white and slender legs entered my view and made it troubling for me to choose where to look; it somehow made me feel bad.

"What's the matter, Tooru?"

"No,no……more importantly Julie, what are you watching ?"

"Whole of Japan's sakura[1c 2] travels."

Unable to hide my discomposure, I asked her and it would seem she was watching an introductory channel which introduces famous places with sakuras.

Looking at Julie with the side of my eyes, I turned on the kettles switch.

With the reason to calm my feelings down, I purposely brought my favorite apple tea (however it is powder type) in order to drink it. "Julie, do you want to drink apple tea too? It's instant though."

"Ja--. I'll gladly have it."

Hearing her reply, and after not even a minute, the sound of the boiling hot water from the kettle could be heard.

Later, I poured in the boiled water, and placed the cup with hot apple tea in it on the table.

"Drink slowly to avoid burning your tongue okay?"

However------

"-------uh!!"

Because Julie was completely focused on the television, it looks like she was absent-minded from my warning and the moment she brought the cup to her mouth, her body twitched.

"Are you okay, Julie?"

"Ja,Ja---……."

The side of her eyebrows slightly went down, and Julie nodded despondently.

After that, I was making a smile while looking at her *fuu**fuu* cooling the apple tea while putting it in her mouth---------

"Tooru, is something wrong?"

"No, nothing."

"Is that soo……Tooru do you want to watch together?"

"Aah, alright."

Accepting Julie's invitation, I kneeled down beside her and started watching the television with her.

Completely changed from last night, time was peacefully and slowly flowing.

(This kind of thing isn't that bad……)

This situation was something completely unimaginable until now-------

It was strange to be beside a foreigner girl watching television, so because it was so weird and pleasant------I felt very dear towards that peacefulness.

"It's beautiful……."

The screen stopped moving and when a new famous place was introduced, Julie made an admiring breath.

"Are there no sakuras blooming in Julie's country?"

"Nai. There is none. That's why I am happy I get to see it like this."

Maybe watching it was a better way to put it but, even so Julie was somehow happy and-----had an entranced expression.

(She can make these expressions too…….)

"Speaking of which…….when you meant get to see it like this, that means you have never seen it directly before?.....well it seems they are blooming inside the school area, so want to go there and see tomorrow morning?"

"…….there are sakuras blooming?"

"Aah, although it's from a far view but, they are blooming. Although you shouldn't expect the sakuras to be elegantly in rows like in the television……. So, how about it Julie?"

"Ja----. I will go……..."

Julie nodded and----------

"I am very looking forward, to…….it."

After finishing her sentence, her head rode my shoulders as if she was approaching me.

"--------!?"

From her sudden action, I was surprised enough to almost raise my voice in reflex.

Her silky hair patted my cheeks, and the nice smell of the shampoo drifted out.

The part where we were touching was warm from the body warmth coming from her.

From her scent and warmth, my nervousness increased and my heartbeat increased.

(Eh, wait, Julie,eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeehh!?)

"Ju,Julie, what is wrong……wait, A-re?"

Time lag blurriness again.

*Suu**Suu*Julie was making peaceful sleep breathing, looking at her like that; I released my nervousness and a big sigh.

(She wasn't entranced rather, she just wanted to sleep huh……)

Just like this, the silver girl who caused confusion to my heart for two days continuously, has reached a peaceful sleep.

Part 2

"U……..n……."

The time when Hotaka Miyabi woke up was just before the date changed.

"Are you awake, Miyabi?"

"Tomoe…….chan……..i……..?"

Miyabi, rather than not knowing when she fainted, she doesn't even know she fainted.

Tachibana guessed it and stopped her with her hand telling her it was okay not to wake up recklessly.

"It seems it was from extreme fatigue."

Miyabi gradually remembered the situation how she collapsed.

"I am completely useless……"

"……That is not true. No matter how much you were power upped by the <<Lucifer>>, that distance was quite severe even for me. Miyabi originally wasn't used to moving your body right? If that is the case, it's better for you not to call yourself useless and be negative from the beginning."

"I see….."

Tomoe was saying this from her true feelings but, Miyabi could only hear it as mere consolation.

“Rest a little more. I will prepare Onigiri[1c 3] on the table, so eat it if you feel hungry.”

“U,un……thank you, Tomoe-chan……..”

Saying her thanks, Miyabi closed her eyes.

But right now, inside her chest was swarming greatly with anxiety towards the severeness of today's training and how low her ability was in response to it.

(Will I, be able to do it……)

Chapter 4 『Again,Apple Tea

Part 1

"Looks like it scattered quite a lot……"

3rd day after enrollment. We followed the promise we made last night and went to see the sakura[1d 1] flowers the first thing in the morning.

But, it seems it was early blooming this year.

Unfortunately, the season for the sakura had passed and, the connecting leaves started to stand out.

"Sorry about the short-lived happiness, Julie."

"Nai. It doesn't change the fact it is beautiful."

Looking up at the peach colored background on the sky, Julie leaked out her impression as if she was mumbling.

Staring at the side of her face, I then once again brought my sights back to the sakura------

I immediately made a good idea.

"I think it is a little too fast from now but, let's come and see it next year and this time when it is in full bloom……..ah, it's also possible to go to a famous nearby spot instead of here though"

"Ja--. I also feel it is a little too fast but, I look forward to it."

Without releasing her sights from the sakura, Julie nodded.

"Let's come back together and watch again"

"Aah, together------"

(…….Together?)

"What is wrong, Tooru?"

"N,no……"

(That just now, don't tell me she thinks it was a date invitation?)

It's true I think Julie is cute but, even so it's not like I have feelings for her.

Purely, I just wanted to show her the sakuras in full bloom but--------

Those were my feelings and it was different from what the invited Julie was maybe thinking of.

It can't be helped if I made her think I am a loose man from inviting her to a date when 3 days had not even passed yet.

"I, I only wanted you to show you the sakura when it is at its prettiest and, I don't mean it in any other way okay?"

"--------?"

In panic, even when I said something with no ulterior moves, Julie tilted her head and the bells rang softly.

Whether it's the misunderstandings with Tachibana yesterday, Julie is distant in response to those kinds of talks.

"Is there some other meaning?"

"Eh, ah, no…….----------uh! I, I know! Let's invite Tora, Tachibana and the rest when we come to see the sakura……! I,its probably more fun when everyone comes…….!"

"Ja---. Is that so, then let's do that."

When I talked to her about flower viewing with everyone while dodging the question, luckily it seems Julie had forgotten about the other meaning.

Hou the moment I made a breath, a gust of wind passed by.

The sakura petals swirled out, and danced up to the sky.

"It's beautiful……..."

While staring at the blizzard of sakura petals, Julie softly mumbled.

"Yeah……..but it's more beautiful when it is at full bloom."

"Is that so……..."

"Now then, it's about time we go back"

I urged Julie, and she started walking beside me.

"…….Tooru."

"Hn?"

"Next year……it's a promise?"

"Aah, it's a promise."

"Ja---"

Julie nodded.

Towards her anticipating figure now that we made a promise in after a year, I just couldn't hide my nauseated smile.

"-------?"

Today for a one hour limit, we were handed a list and were made to check it.

In the list, all the new students' picture, name, martial arts or sports experience or none, the manifested <<Blaze>> was all written in it. Inside this, it means we are to find our <<Duo>> teammate.

"Fuun, it would be nice if there is someone that can compete with my glasses in this."

"When Tora says it, it turns out that way."

"It's not a gag!"

"Well, leaving that aside, if it is okay with Tora would you want to team up?"

"Mu…….?"

I had enough of looking at the list so; I brought up an idea to Tora.

"It's not like we don't know each other, I think it not a bad deal though……."

"Bad? Rather……-------!! Fu,fuun. I don't mind if you say you really want to."

Because it was exactly what I predicted, I made a wry smile inside my heart.

"Also, I am tired of living together with this guy."

Tora pointed towards the guy prostrating himself and sleeping on the table beside him, and murmured.

This guy is called Tatsu, and according to Tora, his body was of a big muscle idiot, his voice was also of a big muscle idiot, and a sport-oriented sweltering muscle idiot. He had a rough personality that doesn't listen to someone when they would talk, and it seems he was quarreling with Tora who has a sensitive personality from the get go.

(Well then, with this my <<Duo>> is going to be Tora)

The application to school will happen on Saturday so it's still far away but, I think it won't be a problem since judging from Tora's reaction it was practically fixed.

"Julie what are you going to do?"

"I'll try talking to some people."

"It'll be great if you team up with a good partner."

"Ja---. Thank you very much."

---after that, an ability measurement was commenced with a 3 to 4 hours' time limit, in the females Julie and Tachibana had shown amazing results, and were bathe with the attentions from the surroundings.

In the afternoon there was a physical ability enhancement training in succession from yesterday but----

During that occasion, Hotaka once again collapsed the same time she reached the goal.

"Looks like this isn't fit for Hotaka."

Someone muttered that and that sentence was deeply left inside my ear.

On the morning of the 4th day of enrollment. I happened to wake up first.

The subdued sunlight coming in from the gap of the curtain made me wake up from my sleep.

(Well, then…….I guess I'll finish changing my clothes before Julie wakes up)

In order to prevent trouble, I should change in the dressing room.

Following the rule made on the first day, I headed towards the dressing room while yawning, but-----

At that moment, I found out that the rule is completely useless if there is a *previous costumer there*.

"[……..]"

It seems the previous customer has the same aim as mine, and it looks like that person just took off the shirt that they were wearing.

I am very sure on how stiff my face became.

In response to that the previous costumer----------Julie, was staring at me with her eyes opened a little in surprise.

Her figure had nothing else other than her lower underwear and the skin-color ratio crossed 90%.

However, thanks to her just stripping off and holding the shirt, I could almost see the important part of her chest and I should be calling this the silver lining of a dark cloud.

No, in the border line of her snow like white skin and shirts, I saw a pink colored------

“Good morning, Tooru.”

A penetrating cold-------but to the person herself it was most likely normal-------her voice with no high or low pitch, pulled me back to reality when my thoughts was in the middle of freezing.

“Go-Go-Good, morning. Juli,e…….”

“Did you sleep well?”

“A,ahh……..”

“That is good. By the way, Tooru is going to change too?”

“Yea,yeah. That’s true……..”

For some reason my tone became polite.

“I am sorry but, please wait over there a little while. If this goes on and we change our clothes like this, I will be embarrassed to change in front of Tooru”

"Tha-that's true……..."

As expected even Julie's cheeks were blushing, and after I nodded with my stiffened face, I turned to the right and headed to the living room.

(Tha-That was shocking……..why am I doing something so cliché……..)

If I had confirmed if Julie was sleeping, or maybe thought of calling out to the dressing room just in case, this was exactly what *No use crying over spilled milk* meant.

"Sorry to have made you wait."

"----------!!"

The instant a voice was called out from my back, I thought I bounced up 10 centimeters on the spot.

"Ju,Julie, Sorry! Just now err, I wasn't trying to peek but…….. !!"

"I don't mind. However, I wish you would be careful from now on."

"Huh……?"

It can't be helped even if I was scolded since this was the first time she revealed her expression this time, I asked back while opening my mouth wide like an idiot towards Julie's words.

"I said, I don't mind."

"I,is it okay to leave it unexplained…….?"

"Ja---. But just like I said just now, please be careful from now on. …….It's embarrassing."

"I, I get it. I'll be careful."

"If you understand this then, this matter is over. So Tooru, you can change now."

After nodding, I entered the dressing room and made a big sigh .

(Fuu, I'm glad it didn't turn into something annoying…….I have to follow on the promise and be careful from now on)

<<Fist Practice>>----- There was one lesson starting from today, and it was free Kumite[1d 2].

There were many amateurs among the new students, and I was wondering if this was okay to have Kumite in the beginning since they might get hurt but, according to the school policy, teaching the skills had no meaning and only when using it, will it reach the body.

In the practice, the two girls that were standing out in the ability measurement yesterday-----Julie and Tachibana were once again bathing in attention from the surroundings.

Tachibana was showing combination attacks while breathing hard. Toward the movements that seem like dancing, voices of shock and admiration could be heard from everywhere.

In response to that she was getting close and distancing herself, Julie's main focus was a hit and out, she used the effectiveness of her speed to oppose Tachibana.

"Julie's movements are amazing too but, Tachibana isn't losing ……"

Almost par-------Julie was ahead in the number of moves but, Tachibana handled all of it and switched from defense to offense between the gaps in an instant.

Especially, the one that attracted the eyes was the excellence of the defense receiving Julie's multitude of strikes.

"Fuun. As expected from the Tachibana style 18 arts."

"Tachibana style?"

"A famous school with various martial arts and that has ancient martial arts as its core. Although this is the first time I am looking at it."

"……You know quite a lot."

"It was written on yesterday's list. Why didn't you read it, you bastard……."

"For the <<Duo>> I am going to team up with Tora anyway, so I thought it was alright not to purposely check others……"

When I made a wry smile and replied, Tora held his head.

And, the whistle to stop the kumite was blown.

"Okay~Okay~. That is all. After a 3 minutes rest, this time change your opponent okay--♪"

At that announcement, Julie and Tachibana took a bow, exchanged a few words and stopped the kumite.

In the end, it looked like both of them failed to give a decisive blow.

"Well then, who am I going to fight with……."

Me and Tora said our farewells and I was in midst of looking for my next opponent--------immediately Julie's figure entered my eyes.

Girls----------most likely her next opponent----------she was talking to her but, somehow it was strange.

The girl swung her head to the side and in the end made a bow before leaving. Again when she talked to another girl, the girl did the same thing and made a bow.

"Julie, can't you find an opponent?"

"Ja---"

When I called out to Julie who looks like she was having trouble finding the next person to talk to, she somehow replied back powerlessly.

It would seem, after looking at her match with Tachibana, they probably got cold feet.

(This is troubling……)

Most of the girls have no martial art experience so this is normal .

"……Julie, want to try it with me?"

"Is it okay?"

"Aah. Looking at that just now, I felt like having a match with you"

"…….Thank you very much."

For an instant, she opened her eyes wide a little, and immediately lowered her head.

One half of the reason I invited Julie was because of sympathy, and the other half was just like I said.

Judging from the entrance exam and the battle with Tachibana just now, Julie is faster than me.

Towards that speed, I wanted to try out how I could oppose it.

"Well then, let's begin."

"Ja---"

The whistle was blown, and we lightly exchange our fists.

Chirin when I thought the sound of the bell which she didn't take out even for this rang, Julie closed the distance in an instant.

(kuh……..! it's a speed beyond my assumptions!! Directly fighting against her is troubling……!)

Competing

Looking at it, this was completely different from a match, and it became a one-sided defensive fight.

We are made to stop the moment before we land an attack to avoid injuries but even so, it was done while we are almost serious .

In the end, I only avoided the decisive blows and was overwhelmed from the start to the end.

"Fuu, as expected from you. Have a match with me next time, Julie."

"Gladly."

Julie who was making nods, somewhat looked happy.

However------after that I saw Julie having problems looking for an opponent, and then I immediately thought.

(Looking at that rate, is she okay finding a <<Duo>>……..?)

Maybe she was having trouble blending into the surroundings well, I was a little worried.

At night-------after finishing bathing and dinner, all that is left is to sleep.

In this hour ever since the second day, it became a routine to watch television beside each other to leisurely pass time.

Today they were featuring animals, and while watching a baby lion rolling around [Cute……..] Julie muttered and her eyes were somewhat sparkling.

"Julie do you like animals?"

"Ja---. Especially birds-------within them I like the parakeet the most."

When I asked her while I was preparing the cup filled with apple tea in it, classic answers such as cats and dogs were not replied back.

"Tooru, do you like animals too?"

The question was reversed back to me and she stared at me, this is-------- the gaze of anticipation.

"……..it's not like I hate them but, it's not like I like them either "

While hesitating and thinking I might disappoint her, I decided to answer her honestly.

"Is that so. Which means, you don't have an animal you like most?"

"Aah, that is the case."

"If that is the case, if by any chance you want to own a pet I would recommend a parakeet. Its wings are beautiful, its voice and gesture is cute, it will get attached to you, it is smart, it is fluffy , it is also springy too"

(What is springy? Is it something like mochi[1d 3]? Even though it has wings?)

"So parakeets are----------"

Like usual, especially her expression had not changed but----------I was a little overpowered by Julie's talk about parakeet which was used in an oddly enthusiastic tone, and had no choice but to nod.

"I, I get it. I'll choose parakeet if I plan to own a pet……."

"Ja----"

Julie who nodded in my reply, somehow looked happy.

"By the way----------"

In the middle of it, I asked the thing that had been bothering me during daytime.

"Hey Julie……err, ah---, have you decided who is going to be your <<Duo>>?"

But even so, since I was hesitant to directly ask her if she could not blend in with the class, it was quite an indirect method.

"……I requested Tomoe."

"I see. Then that's good."

It looks like my worries were needless anxiety, and was an unneeded bother.

If it is Tachibana, she is good in taking care of others, and she probably is in the same level to compare with each other with so, to Julie, she is probably a good partner.

"Tooru's is Tora?"

"Aah. Saying this or another, as expected it looks like I don't have to be hesitant with him thanks to the time we have gone through…….more or less, his personality is difficult though"

While making a wry smile, I placed the cup in front of Julie.

“Thank you very much.”

Julie nodded and drank the apple tea.

I also put the cup on my mouth, like this it turned silent--------but a peaceful time was being passed.

(This time would end soon……)

Although there are few days more, when I think about this time would end tomorrow night, I somehow had a reluctant feeling.

(The first day was filled with nervousness though)

“----------? Tooru, you look like you are enjoying something, is something wrong?”

“No, nothing. It’s laughing while reminiscing.”

In response to Julie tilting her head in wonder, I replied with a wry smile.

5th day, Friday--------and today again, the afternoon was the customary marathon but……..

“She’s late……”

Even though I turned into dusk, I muttered that out because Hotaka has not reached the goal.

(Although she finished faster yesterday……)

Reaching the goal when the sky was starting to change color.

That was what happened yesterday, and what's more she collapsed and fainted.

Even though there were noticeable changes in only a few days, I wondered what happened today.

"Is it about Miyabi?"

Having heard my muttering, Tachibana asked me.

"Tachibana too……well she is your roommate. It's only natural to be worried"

"Aah.----------maybe, Miyabi already……."

I don't have to ask the end of her sentence to know.

In this few days, almost every day, one or two people will drop out school.
Quit

Even though it was tough trainings ever since early enrollment, seeing the number of classmates decreasing as days passes, make me feel lonely.

Right now, even the girl Tachibana was looking after was also [I can't go on anymore……] complaining, that figure was similar to Hotaka.

When I imagined Hotaka was maybe thinking like that too.

"……..I am going to check a little."

After I left only those words, I started running in the track in reverse.

Soon, after going around half a round, I saw Hotaka leaning and sitting down under the tree beside the road.

"Are you okay, Hotaka?"

"Ah……Kokonoe-kun, what's wrong……..?"

When I called out to Hotaka, she powerlessly raised her face.

"It looks like you weren't coming back, so I came to check."

"Ah……..sorry, I twisted my leg……."

"Looks like walking is also a problem……..get on."

"Eh?"

I faced my back to her, and get on one knee.

Hotaka didn't understand the meaning at first but, the same time she realize it, she swing her head in great panic.

"Tha-tha-that's bad! Kokonoe-kun just finished running!! Al, also I am heavy too!!"

Hotaka who is usually quiet, as expected would make loud voices when she was in panic.

"It's okay, just get on. It's not like you can start walking again after resting a bit."

"Bu,but my regenerative powers were also enhanced by the << Lucifer>> too……"

"It's true that might be the case but, if you wait and recover until you can move again, it will turn completely dark and it will be dangerous."

When I reached here, the sun has almost descended and after 30 minutes the shades of night would probably fall.

But even so, Hotaka was still hesitant.

To Hotaka who is bad with the opposite sex, she might need quite some courage to be piggy-backed.

"……..I don't really mind going on like this. But, if we are too late, then Tachibana will worry."

"Ah……"

I think I was a little under-handed but, it looks like bringing out her roommate's name was effective.

After wavering for a while, Hotaka asked back with her cheeks blushed a little.

"E,err……..then, can I count…….on you?"

"Aah, of course"

I made a firm nod, and was okay carrying Hotaka until--------

"…….big"

"Eh, what?"

"No, nothing……."

It can't be helped because of the piggy-back posture but, being pressed by 2 bulges, those extra-large sizes were freely appealing.

Hotaka who was not exerting any strength, completely left her body on me-------

(U,uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!?)

From the softness I found out the first time, my reasoning was on the verge of collapsing.

Enough for me to shout out right now, my brain fell into panic.

(Calm down me. It's not like I wanted to piggy-back her just because I wanted this. That's why calm down, you have to calm down, if you keep trembling you'll be found out……!!)

"He,hey, Kokonoe-kun……"

"Wha-wha-what is it!?"

Even though I was trembling and my voice turned shrill and nervous, it would seem I wasn't noticed by Hotaka.

"I, wonder if I can go on like this……? Although my stamina was supposed to be enhanced by the <<Lucifer>> I couldn 't run until finish……..from now on, I wonder if I can keep up……"

"Hotaka."

It looks like today's retire resulted in giving Hotaka who was originally bad at running the final blow.

Just like that, her low spirits reflected to her voice tone and even now in the verge of crying Hotaka continued her words.

"If I came to Kouryou,I thought something would change…….. but, as expected it was useless……in the end, I was only a << Adapt>> and I have no talent……"

"It's okay. That's because Hotaka passed the exam."

"……..the person that became my opponent for the exam ran away. My legs were frozen and couldn't move……"

While replying back *I see*, I agreed with Hotaka's passing reason .

(It's true that, not everyone won the fight and managed to stay)

If there are people like me and Tachibana who has martial arts experience inside the successful applicants, there are also people who don't even have sports experience……. And Hotaka was one of the latters.

"Ah……..so,sorry. Towards someone who I just knew recently, even if I tell you something like this, it will only trouble you."

"When you think it is painful, it's better to say it out."

"……unn, thank you……."

In a soft voice. Together with those words, Hotaka buried her face into my back.

Just like that, after walking silently for a while----------not long after, I said something with quite a strong voice.

"Those who want long trees would definitely strengthen its roots."

"Eh……?"

After a twitch, Hotaka raised her face.

"That was my master's favorite proverb and he was the one who thought me the basics of martial art. Speaking in martial arts term, it means, if you want to be stronger do not neglect the basics. "

"Kokonoe-kun……."

While saying that, I thought it was ironic.

That, I myself was advancing in the total opposite of those words…….

Even if I have <<Adapt>>, the moment I started seeking the outer <<Power>> from <<Lucifer>>, I have lost the rights to put these words into my mouth.

But even so, when I thought I wanted to cheer Hotaka up, the first thing that popped out were those words.

"I know of the feeling of being worthless. But, <<Power>> is not something that attaches to body overnight. That's why, it might be tough now, I think you should continue running and running. Stamina is something that is obtained the more you run. Something like talent doesn't matter"

"Something like talent…….doesn't matter……"

"Work hard-------I am not going to say something that irresponsible. But, isn't it alright to run a little more before giving up? Even if you don't have talent, you will definitely change that's what I think. And most of all------"

"Most of all…….?"

"I'm going to get lonely if Hotaka goes."

"Ko,Kokonoe-kun……."

If this goes on, Hotaka would probably drop(Quit) out school soon.

Even though we just became acquaintances, I thought it was lonely.

And that's why because I thought of that, I could honestly tell my feelings.

If I don't tell her now, I felt that the chance to talk with Hotaka won't come…….

"……. …….Kokonoe-kun, you were bad at running right?"

"Aah, I was bad at it."

"What place did you get today?"

"1st place."

"You get 1st place everyday……."

"That's because I got stamina from running everyday"

"…… I wonder…….if I could run fast like Kokonoe-kun……?"

"……I can't guarantee you that but, it is certain you will be faster than now if you run everyday"

"A,at times like this I think you should have replied [You will definitely run faster]……"

"Ah,So,sory……"

"Fufu, it's okay. I'll forgive you."

I could hear giggles coming from behind.

"……..hey, Kokonoe-kun. I will work hard. I'll try running a bit more……."

After saying that, Hotaka hugged tighter.

"------!?"

"Thank you, Kokonoe-kun……Kokonoe-kun you are warm……."

"Re,really?"

"Unn, you're warm……."

Being pushed by those soft bulges, my heart was beating hard and wondered if that made my body temperature increase.

Only, at that time, I couldn't see Hotaka's face but even so, I somehow felt confident she was smiling.

And at the same time, I got a confidence everything was okay.

After walking for a while, not long after, we found Julie and Tachibana coming to greet us from far away, and Hotaka made big swings with her hands.

"Well then, good work until today."

"Ja---. Good work."

There were various cookies and candies on the table.

What will begin is a tea party. It was the official last night before determining the <<Duo>>, so we decided to open a modest farewell party.

"It is delicious."

"It's instant though."

"Nai. Things that are delicious are delicious."

"If that's the case then it's good. Come back to drink anytime you want."

"…….is it okay?"

"Aah, there are no dormitory rules that say you can't come------"

"------?"

Towards me who stopped my words halfway, Julie tilted her head.

Even in under normal circumstances, she was already standing out from living with me, if she comes over after deciding her << Duo>> and separated to another room, I feel an unnecessary misunderstanding will occur.

"Tooru, what is wrong?"

"Aah, eer, I have spare packs so I'll give them to you."

"Is it okay?"

"To your roommate-------Tachibana, recommend it to her."

"Ja----"

After looking at Julie making nods, I somehow feel her happiness being transmitted over.

Even though it was a few days, thanks passing time with her close by, I could more or less know about the signs of her expression. In the end, somehow or another, Tora asked me to become his <<Duo>>.

This morning, [I,if you have not decided on your partner then I don't mind teaming up with you] with a big attitude, Tora brought this talk up although it was difficult for him to say it.

So from tomorrow onwards I will be in the same room with Tora, while Julie will be in the same room with Tachibana, which means this pleasant time will end today--------

When I thought about it, I somehow felt a little lonely.

"[……]"

When I started thinking about that the conversation stopped, and the room turned quiet.

Inside the silence, after a while passed like that---------not long later, the first one to open her mouth was Julie.

"Tooru"

Kacha the sound of the cup placed on the saucer sounded and Julie looked straight at me.

"Although it was a short while, thank you very much."

"Aah, this side too. Julie, you can tell me anytime, if you have any problems."

"……..Ja---"

Julie nodded.

"……."

"Tooru?"

"Ah, no……nothing."

It might be my imagination.

The moment Julie nodded, she somehow looked lonely----------that definitely was my imagination.

"Well then well then, remember to send the <<Duo>> application to the registry office before today evening 6 o'clock. If you pass that time, unless there is a very good reason, you won't be changing until graduation so please play nice with your partner . It's a promise with Usa-sensei okay~"

Saturday-------Short Homeroom SHR after the last notification ended, and we reached to after school time, the classmates who decided on their partners, were walking out off the classroom together one after another.

“Should we go too, Tora?”

“Fuun, it’s okay later. It’s a waste of time to purposely lineup.”

“Then let’s go for lunch.”

“Aah, let’s do that.”

We exit the classroom to head to the cafeteria.

(Now that I think about it, what about Julie----------)

And after I turned back into the classroom, she might have gone to register already, together with Tachibana, they could not be seen.

“Enough already, it’s about time we go now.”

About the time when the sun was sinking, we ended our table tennis we started to help digest the meal we finished and I urged Tora to go register.

"Fuun, that's true. It's not funny, to not team up because we didn't make it on time."

"……..that's because Tora went one more game, one more game, and didn't stop."

"There is no way I, can allow more loses than you in mere table tennis."

"Don't get serious on that mere table tennis then……"

Nonetheless, it's true that if my opponent had more wins than me, then I will also get serious.

"Speaking of which Tooru. Who is your roommate teaming with?"

"Looks like its Tachibana."

"Fumu. Tachibana huh…….that's a <<Duo>> I want to have a match with."

"Seriously, that's so Tora-*like*."

If they are decided to be partners then, as <<Duo>>------what's more, there is a practice battle using <<Blaze>>, when I heard that, I could understand clearly about Tora's feelings.

Speed Julie and defense Tachibana

When I am having a match with that team-up, I wonder how far I will go…….

When there is a goal that has to be accomplished, a different type of genuine joy secretly made my heart pound in excitement.

"Fuun, that is so *like you*. Your face is smiling."

"Haha, well yeah."

Just like that, after chatting and talking about people who might team up as <<Duo>, we reached the registry office.

Luckily, or rather it is normal at a time like this, there were no students registering.

I knocked on the registry office window, and called out to the clerk fiddling with a personal computer inside.

"I'm sorry but, I want to register for the <<Duo>> please."

"Oka~y. well then, please bring out your student card here."

"Student card?"

"We will register the <<Duo>>'s name on the student card too."

I see, I agreed and at that time when I was about to bring out my student card.

"Kokonoe, also Tora too……..registering now?"

My name was called out by a familiar voice and when I turned to that side, Tachibana was standing over there.

And standing beside her was------

"He,hello, Kokonoe-kun……"

"Tachibana, and Hotaka too. What are you doing here for?"

"What do you mean by over here. I think it should be the same as you two."

"W,we came for the <<Duo>> registration……."

What does this mean? Tachibana is going to be Hotaka's <<Duo >>……?

From those unexpected words, my brain was filled with question marks.

(But if I am certain, Julie did……..)

Is it certain?

Is it true?

Remember back, that time Julie said--------

"I requested Tomoe"

"----------uh!!"

Yeah, she did not say a single word about teaming up with Tachibana.

"Tachibana! How about Julie!? Who did Julie team up with!? Didn't she request you!?"

"Julie? It's true that she requested me to be her <<Duo>> but, I refused her by saying I was going to team up with Miyabi."

She was refused?

That is why Julie planned not to team up with anyone?

A person that would team up as <<Duo>> with Julie?

------No one.

After enrollment, the only time I see Julie intimately speaking with others, was only with Tachibana, Hotaka and no one else.

(Now that I think about it, at that time too----------)

During the <<Fist practice>>, I remembered the image of her having trouble finding an opponent.

"-------!! Sorry! Who are the ones that has not applied as a << Duo>> yet!?"

"E,h, errrr----------"

While being surprised at my threatening attutide, the clerk said out the names that has not finished registering.

For males, it's me, Tora, and Tatsu these 3 people. For the girls, its Tachibana, Hotaka and also-----Julie.

"Julie…….is not going to team up as <<Duo>> with anyone……..?"

Rather, if we and Tachibana and Hotaka finished registering, Julie will automatically be teamed up with the only one without a partner, Tatsu.

(What does this mean? Why didn't she tell me!?)

Maybe……

If I was in Julie's position----------I can't say it.

There is no way I can say something that can make the person in front worried.

Last night, the thing I felt when Julie nodded----------the reason why I think I saw she looked lonely was because of this.

Next, inside the time we passed time together these few days, the various things she shown surfaced up my mind and vanished.

That time when she brought her body closer to want me to teach her that technique.

That time when she said that baby lion looked cute.

That time when she passionately recommended me the parakeet .

Although it was inevitable, that time when her cheeks were blushing when she was peeked at when changing.

That stern expression she shows when having a match with me or Tachibana.

That time when she said the apple tea was delicious.

The figure she said it was beautiful when looking at the blizzard of sakura petals dancing in the wind.

And for last---------

At the night of enrollment, I remembered the tears Julie made.

(I----------)

Looking at those tears, what did I think?

(I thought I wanted to be Julie's strength!!)

In the next instant, I dashed off like a bullet.

"Tooru!?"

With my leg strength enhanced, it made Tora's voice far away in a blink of an eye.

"Julie, Julie……..!!"

While putting the name of the silver girl in my mouth, while having her figure floating in my mind, I ran to the dormitory as fast as I could.

However----------Julie was not in the room.

"Where did she go……?"

Coming out from the room, I looked around the dormitory.

Even when I asked people if they had seen Julie, not even one person saw her.

Going around all the facilities in the dormitory, even after I came back to the classroom, Julie could not be seen at all.

(Don't tell me she went outside the school? No, going outside in normal days is prohibited.)

Looking for her.

Going around looking and looking for her.

While calling out Julie's name.

But, while being unable to find the silver girl, time was ruthlessly passing by----------

The blue sky turned to dusk and the clock tower rising in the middle of the school site announced that the time was 5 o'clock.

Feeling impatient from the sound of the echoing bell, the moment I looked towards the clock tower--------

"----------!!"

I found a moving shadow over there, and gasped.

Without even distincting whether or not it was human, the moment I saw the silver light swaying from the wind, I started running.

I reached to the tower, opened the door leading to the upper floor and advanced up the stairs.

At the end, there was a big and wide hall there.

When I looked up, a giant bell was being hanged from the ceiling.

The evening sun was shining in----------and inside that light, the silver girl was looking high up the sky.

The madder sky glorified her silver hair.
Silver blonde

And she looked like an angel wishing to go back to the skies……

"……I've been looking for you, Julie."

"Tooru……"

chirin making the bells ring, Julie turned her head over.

"Is there something wrong?"

"Don't say is there something wrong……why……why didn't you tell me about not teaming up as a <<Duo>>with Tachibana……?!!"

"……."

Towards my quite harsh tone, Julie closed her eyes as if to reject my reply.

"It's because, it isn't something that can be fixed by talking……"

It's true that is the case.

If she says so, it might trouble me.

I will team up with Tora as a <<Duo>>, that's because I told her that.

But, even so---------

"But even so, I wanted you to tell me."

"…….why is that?"

"I--------"

I made a vow when I saw those tears.

"That's because I wanted to become Julie's strength."

"Tooru."

Her deep red (Ruby eyes) eyes trembled.

"That's why---------"

I brought out my hands. And directed it to Julie.

"Will you team up with me as <<Duo>>, Julie?"

"Too…….ru……..?"

It seems, Julie did not immediately understand the meaning and tilted her small head, after a while a perplexed expression floated out.

"But, Tora……."

"That guy will understand. That's because we've been together for a long time."

"……..but I don't want to cause any troubles to Tooru----------"

"I'll say it many times!"

I interrupted Julie's words, and once again put my vow and wish in my mouth.

"I want to become Julie's strength. Don't be considerate about causing trouble to me and count on me. No, I want you to count on me!! That's why Julie------"

"Tooru……."

"Please become my << Partner Duo >>!"

The feelings from my heart I said, echoed throughout the clock tower and sky.

Those feelings----------reached Julie's heart and echoed.

Julie made one step forward.

She walked out, and weighted her small hands on mine.

"Ja----"

While nodding like usual------

Julie smiled.

The first time I saw her smiling face.

It was a small smile but, it was very attractive-----

For a brief moment, I was lost in words…….

Part 2

"Okay, the registration is done with this."

The student cards that were given back from the clerk had both of names written on it.

From this moment onwards, Tooru and Julie are now official << Duo>>.

Hearing from the clerk, this was the first time a gender different <<Duo>> was team-upped in Kouryou.

Although many years have passed since the creation of the organization, when they think this is the first, Julie could only feel some kind of fate with Tooru.

"Okay then, once again please take care of me, Julie. …….. also, definitely tell me if you have any problems from now on. That's because we are officially partners from today onwards."

"Ja----"

"Good Good."

"Ah……."

Tooru petted on Julie's nodding head like a dear child.

Julie thought it was ticklish.

At the same time, she remembered her father's big warm hands.

That warmth still lingered even after Tooru's hand left.

When Tooru was not looking, Julie touched the part she was patted on------and made a quiet smile.

"Well then, let's go back. To our room."

"Ja----. That's true. And-------"

Julie nodded to Tooru's words, and said out the suggestion that she was conscious about when she thought the daily life until now will start once again.

"Again, apple tea-----"

Chapter 5 『It's a Promise

Part 1

After finishing registering for the <<Duo>>, and after reporting this to Tachibana and the rest during dinner time---------

We returned to our room and this happened after a while.

"Tooru. ……are you going to take a bath?"

"Hn? It's okay for Julie to go in like usual."

"……"

Julie swung her head and *continued her words……for some reason with her cheeks blushed*.

"Are you not coming in together?"

"Buu----!?"

I spurt out the apple tea.

"Ju-Ju,Juli-Julie----------!?"

From that sudden explosive remark, while it being natural, I was only shocked.

Peek……*Peek*…….

On the other side, Julie was alternately lowering her sights down and then to me.

(Ta, taking a bath together!? Which means both of us soaking in the bathtub together, both of us naked----------no no no that's bad! At least with swimsuits…….there's no way we have that! …….no no no that isn't the problem!!)

And after a big chaos, I finally thought it was a good idea to ask the person herself directly.

"He-hey Julie…….if I did not hear this right……. ju-just now, did you ask me if I wasn't entering the bath together?.. ....."

"…….Ja---"

Chirin, the bells rang, and Julie moved her head vertically.

Her cheeks as expected were pumped with blood and it looks like she understands what she just said out of her mouth.

"Wh-why did you suddenly say something like this…….?"

When I asked her while unable to hide my trembling from her explosive remark, an unexpected question was replied back.

"Because there school rule says, after the <<Duo>> has been teamed up they must know about each other deeply, and pass time together as much as possible to strengthen their bonds……."

(Now that I think about it, we were told that before!)

"No no no, even if it is school rules, we don't have to follow it that closely!"

"Is that so?"

"Aah. Gen-generally speaking, going together with a male to a bath, you don't like it right?"

"……."

Towards my question, Julie looked downwards in a degree of embarrassment.

After a while, she looked at me with upturned eyes.

"It is embarrassing but, *Tooru is special* so……."

"--------!?"

I got violently agitated from that one sentence.

The misunderstanding on the first day--------love at first sight, did it turn to reality in this one week interval.

(N-no, I can't call it love at first sight after one week passed right? What is this called? Falling in love normally? No, it's true that I told her to be my <<Duo>> but, I don't mean it that way!!)

And, when I was agitated----------

"Tooru…….somehow feels like a papa"

I seriously was about to fall over from Julie's comment.

"Hahaha, I-I see, papa huh…….bu-but give up on the bath. As expected there is a lot of problems……al-also, that goes for toilet"

"Ja----. I understand."

With various things, the sudden explosive remark that was reached has finally reached a stage where it could be dropped.

Just like that, Julie entered the bathroom, and when I became alone in the room, I made a big sigh.

(That was surprising……to think she would take the school rules so literally…….)

In a way, she is very honest but, in another way to put it she could be called a natural airhead.

(……..if I nodded just now, right now I would be……)

Immediately, I swung my head to shake off the delusion in my head.

But-------

The time when I found out this matter was not over yet was, after a while I got out of the baths.

"Well then Tooru. It's about time to sleep."

"……."

"Tooru?"

Julie tilted her small head.

But, the one having the bigger question was me.

That's because Julie is in my futon for some reason.

"Are you not going to sleep?"

"No, I am sleeping but……"

It was the second night of enrollment that we discussed and decided, I will be using the lower level while Julie uses the top level.

Even so, right now Julie was unmistakably in the lower level bed and crawled inside the futon.

"Hey Julie. I think this might be impossible but, are you planning to sleep together……..?"

"Ja---. That's because we are <<Duo>>."

"……."

It's true I said no to going into the bath and toilet together but, I never thought it would result to this…….

"I- I'll ask just in case, let me ask what you think regarding sleeping with me."

"I was always together with mama at home so, although it is embarrassing but actually I feel lonely when I sleep alone."

Julie made a downhearted expression before, changing it into a small smile.

"That's why, even though it is in a <<Duo>> way, I am very happy to be able to sleep together"

"I-I see……."

Towards that smile, I could only answer powerlessly.

(Judging from the talk just now, it looks like I am being treated as a father-like figure inside Julie and has no ulterior intentions)

Because she said until she was happy so, I felt happy being trusted.

(If Julie is happy then……wait, nonono, it's a no, no matter how much I think.)

For an instant, I hurried and correct my fluctuating thoughts.

"As,as expected we can't. No matter if it is <<Duo>>, we are both man and woman……."

And, although I told her that, I noticed something.

Stare----------.

Using eyes like a thrown away puppy, she was staring fixedly at me.

“I-it’s only for today……..”

“Ja-----♪“

(Thi-this is because Julie said she was lonely! Also this is only for today! A-and I told her I would become her strength as a <<Duo>> , Un!)

While repeatedly making excuses to no one else but my heart, we entered the bed which was quite cramped for 2 people to sleep in.

And of course, Julie was beside me.

“Good night, Tooru”

“Go-good night, Julie……”

My voice was shaking from the nervousness.

(For now, I’ll pay attention not to touch her body……yeah, unn. I’ll just have to keep quiet at the corner. If I do that, nothing will happen!)

Although I was thinking that, if I were asked if this would calm my feelings down then my answer would be the same as of course.

Doki Doki Doki Doki Doki [1e 1], my heart beat was ringing like an alarm bell.

I know. That Julie has no ulterior motives.

And of course, I have no intentions to do anything.

(Nothing! Nothing will happen! She is just sleeping beside me!!)

---But in the next moment, that thought was smashed apart.

Pitoo.

"!?"

Julie gripped tightly on the sleeves of my shirt in order to touch her head on my shoulders.

"Julie, Julie!?"

"Tooru…….is it okay if I sleep like this?"

"Eh, wai, that's, no, something is htting, Uee…….!?"

Inside the darkness, Julie's voice was calm in contrastive to my panicking voice. No-----

"Just like this, I felt like I went back to the past……"

As if she was mumbling, she continued her words with a somewhat lonely tone.

“It feels like papa came back…….”

“……..err, how is your Julie’s father?”

“……..he passed away few years ago.”

“I see……..sorry……”

“Nai. Do not mind it.”

I don’t know why I am piled up against Julie’s father.

But, my thoughts inside me changed a little.

“Hey, Julie. I am not Julie’s father but…….if it is okay, together like this again……wan-want to sleep like this?”

“Ah…….Tooru……”

“Bu-but not every day. It's only when Julie thinks she is very lonely okay?”

“Ja---------!”

Even in this darkness, I knew Julie was nodding her head.

From the tone of her voice, I also know she was happy.

“Thank you very much, Tooru.”

In order to display her happiness------

Gyuu

Julie hugged my arm.

“!?”

“I am very happy.”

(~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~!!)

Being pushed by her soft and modest chest, the sweet scent from getting in contact with her, I was suppressing my mouth from shouting out any moment now.

Tonight---------

Julie was still hugging my arm even after she fell asleep, so I was wide-awake from being nervous and couldn’t sleep until it was morning. The week ended and it was Monday morning.

After Homeroom HR, I was in low tension since morning when I immediately thought of English.

However Tsukimi-sensei was contrastive to me and was in high tension.

"Oh Hello ♥ did everyone determine your <<Duo>> safely♪un un~ Well then well then, now that we have our partners decided today onwards it's a fresh start, let's change the seats with the <<Duo>> lined together♪ …….hn? Oh my oh my? it looks like there are people who have not change with their temporary roommate partners."

"Our compatibility was good."

"Wawah! What kind of compatibility? What kind of compatibility!?"

"Personality"

"Chie--……"

What kind of answer was she expecting.

"Then how about the good friend combination seating in front of Kokonoe-kun?"

"Who is a good friend with this muscle idiot!"

Tora's <<Duo>> was Tatsu. Since I teamed up with Julie, Tora who was left out was in the end, was automatically teamed up with the other unregistered person Tatsu.

(Sorry, Tora……..)

"Hnmou----, hey Tora-kun that's no way to talk to your Sensei. I 'll scold you~"

"I refuse."

"Seriously that's no good……oh well. Well then well then continuing with my talk, since the <<Duo>> have been decided, immediately next week a practice match with the <<Blaze>> permitted----------<<New blade battle>> will be commenced♪"

The classroom made a commotion at that announcement.

And of course, from bewilderment and shock.

We heard there were practice matches with the use of <<Blaze>> permitted but, there was no one here who thought it was going to be this fast.

"Un Un. I understand clearly what you all are saying. I thought the same thing during my school days♥ That damn glasses brought that up……ah, that's a secret to Mikuni-sensei okay."

It would seems her homeroom teacher was Mikuni—sensei.

"Okay then, I will explain the <<New blade battle>> rules, keep your ears straight and listen— "

After saying that, Tsukimi-sensei put her hand on her head and made a rabbit-like reaction.

Even though the ribbon was originally rabbit-like, is she doing this because she knows adding her hands will show 4 ears?

"First off, in the schedule--in next week's Saturday-------this means it was on the day before GW[1e 2]. We will be having it before the holidays, so even if someone gets sent to the hospital it's going to be okay♪"

It was an ill omen sentence.

"The start begins at 5 o' clock, and ends at 7 o' clock making it 2 hours, the clock tower's bell are the signal------. The place is the whole northern block---"

"Northern block, which means, here----------inside the school is also included?"

When I asked that question, Tsukimi-sensei made a thumb stand up and nodded.

"The answer is yes ♥ Each <<Blaze>> has its each special attributes and, to match with that, fighting head on is okay, and so is working out strategies. Taking account in the terrains and how to make the situation in favor to you and fight is also important♪"

It would seem it has quite real life battle content.

(What's left is depending on the opponent, huh.)

Judging from the lessons in this one week interval from last week, the one that stands out in skill the best in the new students is Julie.

But, since I won't be fighting against Julie who is my <<Duo>>, the biggest enemy would be Tachibana, Tora, if it is power then Tatsu, a guy named Kigami who has experience in martial arts, and another guy called Izumi who has sports experience and is the class's 1st ranker in cooperation ability.

I might as well guess who it is inside them was what I thought but----------

"We~~ll then well then, regarding the battle opponent everyone is looking forward to…….nannannannannan okay-----♪"

Tsukimi-sensei made a smile with her whole face, and made her fingers stand up before saying enjoyably.

"***Everyone*** is the enemy ♥"

On that days lunch break.

Me, Julie, Tachibana, Hotaka, Tora and Tatsu headed over to the cafeteria to eat together but-----

When the <<New blade battle>> topic came up, Hotaka was holding the cup filled with milk and made a gloomy sigh.
Newcomer battle

"Haa……..we just decided our <<Duo>> and yet……..."

"It's because we just decided it is what I think, Miyabi."

"I agree with Tachibana. It has a meaning because of this period that is what I think."

When I agreed with Tachibana's words, Tora sitting beside me made a nod.

"What do you mean?"

Being asked, Tachibana--------started explaining the almost similar content we were thinking about.

"They probably want us to experience a real format battle as fast as possible. It's true even though we are taught about how to move and readiness as <<Duo>> in lessons but, all of it is just knowledge. Only when we accumulate experience, knowledge will truly be attached into the body."

"The get used to it than learn it thing huh."

"Fuun. Time period and how wide the range is, also even though the rules are from battle royals, uncertain factors are high, preparing it into a more actual battle-like situation."

"Time period? Now that I think about it, we are doing it quite late. What is that?"

"30 minutes after the start and it will be evening, it'll become sunset before the end and the view will become very hard to see, Miyabi."

"Fuun."

To see through the influence during bad eye sight, is to me a very important aspect.

Since my <<Blaze>> is a <<Shield>>, i have no choice but to block my opponents attack and bring it to a close-range combat, having the time period at night time puts me at a disadvantage.

But, having that type of situation is what I wish for.

Able to grasp the chance of victory during a disadvantage situation, is what I think gaining strength is.

"I see, there are a lot of reasons……I understand the reasons but, I think I would be better after getting more used to the <<Blaze>> first……."

Until now, and from now until the <<New blade battle>>, there were no lessons on using <<Blaze>>.
Newcomer battle

However, even without lessons, it doesn't seem to be the case if I say training with the use of <<Blaze>> can be conducted or not.

"Miyabi. This time is different from the entrance examination so losing does not mean the end so; you don't have to force yourself to go beyond your ability. After school today, we will be able to use <<Blaze>> so just steadily get used to it."

Just like what Tachibana said, starting from now until the <<New blade battle>> as long an application has been sent, after school, with a condition of using it inside the school area, the use of <<Blaze>> is permitted.
Newcomer battle

Most likely, no most definitely, all of our classmates are starting <<Blaze>> training after school.

The most important thing here is, to be told it is okay to *observe without permission* other <<Duo>>'s training.

It's the so-called spy act the school approves.

It's true that, it was written on the classmate profile that was given when we were finding our <<Duo>> but, since I thought it was sketchy; I didn't look through it thus not memorizing it.

Even though the weapon is the same, the battle styles are different, and have an infinite variety.

Which means, in the point of view of information battle, then it isn't exaggerated to say the <<New blade battle>> has begun at this present point.
Newcomer battle

"Seriously, this is annoying……."

"Fuun. Your face doesn't say that, Tooru."

"That goes to both of us."

I felt anticipated to have matches with strong opponents.

I think this is a simple personality but, since this is my personality I can't help it.

"Ko-Kokonoe-kun and Tora-kun too, you two look so eager…… ……Is it because there is a reward……..?"

The <<Duo>> that accumulates excellent grades in the <<Newcomer battle New blade battle>>, in a name of special reward, they will receive the chance to be sublimated without waiting to the end of the semester.

As long as the <<Level up>> is not entirely limited to one time, it is better to receive the <<Sublimation Ceremony>> as much as possible.

However---------

"It's not because of the reward. Of course, I won't deny that it is one of the reasons."

While answering Hotaka, I send my sights towards Tora.

"Fuun. It's been a year and a half since fighting with you seriously."

"Aah, yeah. Don't get eliminated before getting to me okay?"

"That is my line."

We send each other fearless smiles, and lightly bashed our fist together.

"E-err……."

"Fufu, this might be a relationship Miyabi has problem understanding. But, why don't we work hard too so that we won't lose to these two, Miyabi."

"U,un……..but, I might become a burden……"

"It's okay. It's true that currently Miyabi is inferior to these two in terms of ability and skill. If that is the case then all we have to do is to make a plan to bury the ability that you are inferior at. And more importantly, don't forget you have me as a partner. This is not a one on one but a battle with <<Duo>> okay."

From the way of speaking, it looks like Tachibana has no intentions of losing.

"-----<<Duo>> huh……"

"Something wrong, Tooru?"

"No, I just remembered something from the <<Duo>>. I was wondering about the <<Absolute Duo>> the director was talking about last time……."

When the <<Lucifer>> was being administrated, and during the entrance ceremony, it was a word I heard twice.

"Fumu, that huh. I was bothered about that and took a look back at the pamphlet but, that word was not in it. Judging from the nuance, it makes one think it is related to the <<Duo>>, and as long as the director purposely prayed for us to reach the << Absolute Duo>> eventually, I think it is something important…… ……."

"Fuun. Doesn't this make it clear that we are being recognized as real-Life experiments to her?"
guinea pigs

"A guinea pig…?"

Hearing Tora's sarcasm, Julie raised her eyebrows.

"Well, I understand being called that is nasty, Julie."

"Nai. That might not be the case……..."

"That might not be the case?"

"I prefer hamsters so, I prefer that side more……."

Hearing that sentence, I was about close to slide off my chair.

……incidentally Tatsu has been *Gahaha* laughing and talking in his own pace from the beginning to the end, so we left him out.

"Tooru. It's about time to sleep."

Julie was sitting small and quietly on my bed.

It was the atmosphere like; if she has a tail then it would be making big swings left and right.

"……you mean together right?"

"Ja----♪"

Towards her nodding figure, my eyesight was getting dizzy.

"Okay then, good night, Julie."

"Good night, Tooru."

My heart was beating violently like last time, but in order to make it unable to be sensed, I calmed myself as much as possible.

The lights were turned off, and entered in the futon lined up.

(Uh! A,again……!!)

Julie naturally grabbed my shirt's sleeve tightly.

Even after Julie fell asleep, I was the same as last time and couldn't sleep.

But this time, I was calm.

It might be because this was the second time but, more than that ----------

(Otoha……)

Julie's figure making sleep breathing was stacked over by my deceased sister.

When I was young, I used to sleep together with my sister.

“Hn……..”

I gently pat Julie’s head.

Julie is not Otoha.

Even so, I felt a little warmed up from the nostalgia.

But-----

Tight.

My arm was clung onto again tonight and as expected, I became conscious about the fact Julie isn’t my sister.

(A-again, the softness is! Being pushed! Uwah, get-getting even tighter, gi-gi-give me a break, Julie----------!!)

And again tonight, I lacked sleep.

The week ended, and it was after school.

Towards the <<New blade battle>>(Newcomer battle), me and Julie were in the courtyard again today, having a practice match with <<Blaze>>.

There are people making tactics, and training under the consciousness of combinations but, instead of re-tempering a dull sword by worrying about combinations, we focused on how our fitting style is and conducted a practice match to grasp them.

Exchanging fist and blade, the gasping offense and defense continues.

But, not long later, the match's trend started to be seen.

Julie's extremely fast continuous attacks were gradually cornering me.

(Kuh, this is bad if this goes on. For now, I'll make some distance……..!)

And the moment I took some distance.

"---------!?"

Towards the <<Saber>> approaching my eyes, I opened my eyes wide in surprise.

Throwing the <<Saber>> which is her own <<Soul>>-------I barely managed to protect myself from that surprise attack but……

"Checkmate"

Immediately right after, the remaining <<Saber>> was thrust towards my throat and the outcome was determined.

"I didn't think you would throw the <<Saber>>."

"I have two so; I thought throwing at least one was okay."

(……unlike her appearance, her imagination is quite exciting.)

Because it is self-taught, the style is not restricted, which means it might be better not to hear about it.

"Let's take a little break."

"Ja------"

After taking a bow to end it, the atmosphere Julie was having during the practice completely disappeared.

Just a moment ago, she was emitting a crushing atmospheric pressure but now, she turned into a calm beautiful girl with few words.

Similar to her ability, she was a completely different person.

That was how much the amount of concentration she put towards the battle.

(It'll be 4 continuous lost with this on today, huh……..we were still equal during the <<Fist practice>>……..)

Although I was overwhelmed during the first match but, originally my fighting skills learned are centered on being

weaponless and if it is a weaponless fight right now, then we should be equal.

But, when it comes to <<Blaze practice>> my winning percentage falls until 20 percent.

Originally adding in with her extreme speed, her reach extended just by holding on to weapons and naturally her attack power increases too, furthermore since her dual blade is self-taught, it becomes hard to read her swordsmanship and thus making it uncontrollable.

(I have to become stronger or else…….)

“Tooru, can I have a moment?”

“What is it?”

“Changing the use of the <<Shield>> a little and only focus on either offense or defense, how about it"

“What do you mean?”

When question marks are popping out from not understanding her intentions, and told me to thrust my hand out.

I did what she said and she used her right hand to ward off my arm then------

"Ai1"

At the same time she entered my chest area.

……..until a distance where, if it was *Hotaka or Tachibana they might have bumped into me*.

"Tou2 ------and, like this"

After saying that, Julie looked up at me.

"……"

Her face is close.

……..somehow this distance. Is like she is going to kiss me---------

(Wait, what am i thinking about seriously!?)

"I was too close. At this distance"

Not noticing my agitating, Julie took half a step back.

(You really were too close…….)

"Th-then, what was that…….?"

"In a form of Tooru stepping in after receiving attacks but, this would mean receiving attacks while stepping in. The risk is high but, you can enter this distance one action faster. When you reach this spot, it is time for the Thunder god's strike[Mjolnir]"

"Thunder god's strike?[Mjolnir]"

"It's this."

Julie was making stance like pulling a bow behind.

"……what is that name?"

"It is the weapon Thor holds that we talked before."

"I-I see……."

A name was given before I knew about it.

Leaving that aside for now, my eyes became wide-open from Julie's advice.

"Under the crossings of a long sword is hell but, taking a step forward will make it paradise huh……."

"-------?"

Julie tilted her small head, *Chirin* and the bells rang.

"It's a sword's essential point said by a certain samurai. It has the same meaning with what Julie said."

Reading breathing patterns and step into the opponent's chest area the moment the opponent moves, making it attack and blocking at the same time.

Stepping forward will increase the risk but, getting closer to the fulcrum lowers the power and makes blocking the attack easier.

And after blocking the attack, at that moment just like what Julie said, it's my opportunity.

"Thanks for the advice. Julie. Sorry but, can I rely on you about the other side."

"Ja---"

Julie made a nod and made a small smile before taking distance.

On that day------after we teamed up as a <<Duo>>, Julie will show smiles sometimes.

I felt that it was the proof of trust to me and although I didn't say it out my heart was quite happy.

"Here I go, Tooru……!"

But, reading breathing patterns can be easily said but, it is not something that can be put into practice in just a day.

"What's wrong, Tooru?"

"It might be possible if I make it to a situation where reading breathing patterns is easier. Well, it is still hard for the current me ……"

"Let's work hard."

Julie grasped both her hands tightly.

"Aah, yeah"

If I am asked if I can master it before the <<New blade battle(Newcomer battle)>> it was hard to say.

But even so, it's true that I made a new goal for now on, although I did not achieve any results but with a fulfilling feeling we decided to end today's training.

"Ah……..Ko-kokonoe-kun, Julie-chan. You two just got back?"

"Ja----. Miyabi is going out?"

"U-un……"

When we just got back to the dormitory, we unexpectedly met up with Hotaka right when we changed places with her while she was heading outside. “Are you still preparing for the << Newcomer battle
New blade battle>>?”

“Eh? Ah, around those lines…….”

Hoping to make plans, she was following what Tachibana proclaimed; Hotaka and Tachibana would look around the premise after school and would conduct a strategic meeting inside their room.

“I see. The sun is going to sink so, be careful.”

“Fight, Miyabi.”

“Un……Thank you, Kokonoe-kun, Julie-chan.”

After nodding to us, Hotaka jogged outside.

“She sure is working hard, that Hotaka.”

“Let’s work hard too.”

Julie gripped both of her hands tightly together and made a motivated pose.

But since her expression didn’t change much as usual, I accidentally laughed thinking it was a little weird and Julie tilted her small head looking at me doing so.

"-----?"

There are 4 days left to the <<New blade battle (Newcomer battle)>>----------the chime signaling the end of 2nd period rang, and everyone from the classroom leaked out their sighs.

"Haa……..it's finally over……"

Even though they say they center on skill training, study subjects are of course natural.

In the morning, it has been decided to have lessons for 2 hours in the classroom, various contents from normal stuff and abnormal stuffs were cramped into my head.

And the subject of today's normal content was, English----------

After the lesson ended, I lied on the table and everyone gathered around my table.

"Fuun, even though it just started, what are you going to do if you are in this state now?"

"If Japanese people can talk Japanese then it's all okay…….
"

"E,errr, isn't it better to be able to speak in English, Kokonoe-kun……..?"

"Just like what Miyabi said. It is important to learn languages since we might be dispatched overseas after graduation, we were told that in the first lesson. Haa……."

"If not for the sigh at the end and that tired face, it would be a plausible sentence……"

"----------!! I-I don't have a choice. I have always been bad in English……!!"

"Ahaha……..actually I am also bad at it……"

"Haa……..this is annoying……."

"Fuun, every last one of you is pitiful."

""""……""""

From the single sentence from Tora who has excellent grades, just like the literature we have nothing to reply.

"……now that I think about it, Julie has it easy with English. Is it your country's official language?"

"Nai. It is a language quite close to English but, it is different."

"Fumu…….so that means Julie can speak in 3 different languages"

Julie swing her head in Tachibana's question.

"It's 6 different languages."

"""Six!!"""""

From that large number even Tora was shocked and 4 of our voices piled up together.

"Gimle language, Japanese language, English------and 3 more northern European languages."

"Tha-that's amazing……."

"The language from northern countries is quite similar to Gimle 's. English has been enforced in my school and for Japanese, I have been taught by mama like I said before. Although it is a different story when it comes to writing literature……."

Looks like for her writing, she has her mother language, English , and more or less Japanese although it was in the best she can do.

Even when Julie showed such a downhearted state, I think being able to talk it itself is amazing enough.

"He-hey Julie-chan. Next time, is it okay if I ask you about things I don't know about?"

"Ja---.I'll be happy too if it is within my ability."

"…….Sorry Julie. Can I count on you……?"

"Count me in as well……..."

"Fuun. I don't mind teaching you, Tooru."

"No, judging from Tora's personality, it will definitely turn Spartan and be annoying so I'll pass on it."

"……"

"Oh yeah, Julie. Sorry for it being sudden, but I have something I don't understand from the lesson just now, can you teach me that ?"

"Ja---.Where?"

Julie nodded and opened her own notes.

On it there were beautiful English cursive writing and-------- mysterious hieroglyphic written words there.

"What is this?"

"…….Japanese"

After saying that, Julie casts her eyes down embarrassed.

"Uu……."

Touching Julie's slender white legs is somewhat-------no, is quite nerve wrecking.

"Tooru?"

"A-aah……"

Julie tilted her head in wonder but after I nodded saying it's okay, I touched her soft skin and hands.

(It's really smooth……..wait, what am I thinking about!!)

If people ask why am I doing this then, this is also a part of a lesson.

Today is 2 days just before the <<New blade battle (Newcomer battle)>>, and dull ash colored clouds were covering the sky.

The 4th period, health lessons was conducted in such weather, first-aid--------we were learning how to roll up bandages.

After being explained on several ways to roll bandages, this time it was time for the <<Duo>>'s to put it to practice but----------

(Ev-even if it is a part of a lesson……..)

Touching a girl's bare feet as expected has some resistance.

Thanks to that, my heart beat was in increased state, and Julie made a soft shocked voice.

"Ah…….Tooru, you skipped one step."

"Eh? Isn't it like this……Buu!?"

I lifted my face and the moment I move my sights from her legs to face, I spurt out.

Because her skirt was just wound up until it was in the limit zone.

"---------?"

I quickly moved my sights back to her legs, and swing my head to ward of the image I saw.

(Sh-she's too defenseless, this is just too……..!!)

This situation was not the only one; she would wear a one-shirt as a housedress when it is hot, she would also bring her face to a super close distance and so forth; Julie is quite defenseless in regards to the opposite gender.

Although it's not like I don't feel embarrassment coming from her, since her cheeks blushed when I accidentally peeked at her changing…….

(I completely don't know her standards……..no, I can agree if I think I am being treated as a father-like figure right?)

And when I was troubled in my head-----

"Tooru?"

Julie tilted her head in wonder.

"Ah, So-sorry. I was trying to remember what I was supposed to do--------Buu!?"

When I was trying to face towards Julie face, I once again spurt out from the same scenery……..

After a while, around the time we finish bandaging each other, Tsukimi-sensei *Pan**Pan* clapped her hand and gave the next instruction.

"Well then------, next off try it on a different person other than your <<Duo>>---♪"

(This is great……as expected, I would get tired from being too nervous when I have a girl (Julie) as my partner……)

After I made a sigh of relief from Tsukimi-sensei's single sentence, Hotaka called out to Julie.

"Ju-Julie-chan. Why don't we do it together……?"

"Ja---. I am counting on you, Miyabi."

(I will go with Tora-----)

"Wait, huh? Where's Tora?"

Tora's figure sitting in front was missing, and I could not find him even after I looked around the classroom.

"What are you saying Kokonoe. Tora and Tatsu were disputing throughout and were making a commotion so; they were thrown out to the corridor."

Towards Tachibana explaining that with a fed up face, I could only reply back with a wry smile.

It looks like I was more nervous than I thought.

(I have no choice. I'll just go with someone else……..)

Although I thought of that, all the guys has already finished grouping up.

That means, the only ones remaining are------

"Looks like everyone else finished teaming up. As people that are remaining, why don't we team up, Kokonoe."

"Eh, a-aah……."

Since I had a girl once again as my partner, I predicted the I would feel nervous in the practical afterwards so made a small sigh--------right after, I found out even the prediction was half-hearted.

"What's wrong, Kokonoe? Hurry up and bandage me."

(Ev-even if you tell me that……)

The instruction of the next practical was the method of bandaging when the shoulders is dislocated but, this was much more difficult than what I had imagined.

First off, wrap around the arms then next is one wrap round around the body's (Chest) --------and this is repeated several times but……. It means during the time when wrapping around the body, *my hands were close to touching the bulges on her chest*.

What's more, Tachibana's chest was the 2nd biggest inside the class and it was quite nerve wrecking to avoid having my hands touching them, because of that I made a mistake in distributing my strength and accidentally made Tachibana's breathing become wild.

"Haa, fuu,hn, haaa……..Kokonoe, hnn……it's a little, tight ……."

Furthermore, I made a mistake in the wrapping and accidentally made the wrapping further emphasizes her huge chest, and together with her disarrayed breathing, her oddly erotic figure is in front of me……..

"Oya Oya? Kokonoe-kun. To think you would do an abnormal play right off the bat, you won't be satisfied anymore if it is normal you know---?"

At that moment, Tsukimi-sensei threw out an unnecessary sentence.

“Abnormal…….?”

“Although it might be your preference but, please give up on tying her up to emphasize her chest in lessons okay, you Ecchi-man [1e 3]♥”

“---------!?”

Making a doubly sure sentence, Tachibana noticed the situation she was in-------

“T-to think you have a liking in humiliating someone using bondage…….A-a guy like you is shameless!!”

“It’s a misunderstanding----------!!”

“You shameless pervert----------!!”

Even though I quickly deny it, Tachibana didn’t lend her ears and walked out the classroom.

“Ahahahaha it’s better you hurry and chase after her, or else the misunderstanding is going to get worse, Kokonoe-kun♪”

“Whose fault do you think it is!!”

I shouted towards Tsukimi-sensei who was making a smiling face with one of her eyes closed and dashed out the classroom to chase after Tachibana.

"Ooh, Youth youth~ *Whistle**whistle*"

I could hear an openly enjoying voice coming from the classroom, and I cursed her inside my mind.

(Aah, damn it! An annoying person is my homeroom teacher……!!)

It became evening; the weather turned weird and started raining.

Thanks to that, me and Julie ended our match quickly and returned to the dormitory but-------

"Ah……..Tachibana……"

After dinner, half-way of heading towards the training room because I felt like moving my body a little more.

In the lounge, I saw Tachibana inside the group of students relaxing there, and stopped my legs.

"Mu…….?----------uh! Koko-Kokonoe-kun……….."

After turning back at my muttering, Tachibana's face instantly blushed and showed an agitated state.

"I-I am very sorry about what happened in the afternoon. That kind of insult in front of everyone------"

"No, it's okay already. And, let me say this just in case, you don 't have to kneel on the ground."

Continuing from a few days ago, she also kneels on the ground today, and persuading her to stop requires quite a lot of time but that's another story.

"More importantly, what is Tachibana doing here-------Shogi[1e 4]?"

In the dormitory lounge, there was a television, table, chairs and sofa placed there, it was a space opened for students to freely relax in. It was a place with magazines, Manga, games prepared on the shelves along the wall, and an embarrassing Manga cafe providing snacks and drinks which can be consumed as much as you want.

In that lounge, Tachibana was holding a book in one hand and a Shogi board was placed on the table.

"Aah, it's Shogi problems."

"Is it interesting?"

"Fufu, there is no reason for me to do it if it is not interesting right. Kokonoe want to try it too?"

"I'll give up on that. I am bad at using my head."

"Fumu. It's true it feels like that."

"……even though you suck in English."

"Th-the only thing I am bad at is English."

Certainly, compared to me who has bad grades other than sports, Tachibana is doing quite well other than English.

However, more importantly-------

"Uu……."

She crossed her arms together when she looked back at me, her huge nicely shaped breast was riding on it and emphasized.

Thanks to that, I had a flashback on what happened during the afternoon, and the person concerned which was Tachibana, is in an unworried state.

"What's wrong, Kokonoe?"

"N-no……more importantly, to like Shogi, you sure are quite refined."

While feeling my cheeks getting hot, I returned the topic to Shogi to avoid being noticed.

"Fufu, my house is a certain martial arts dojo. I learned it as the next successor but, the pupils around there were only elders. And what those elderly picked during their resting time was Shogi."

After making a gentle smile, Tachibana closed the book with Shogi problems in it which she was holding.

"Well then, it's about time I return back to my room. Sorry to stop you."

"I don't really mind. Originally, it was me who called out to you in the first place anyway."

"Okay then, see you tomorrow morning."

After saying that, Tachibana cleaned up the Shogi board and book and exited out the lounge.

(Well then, I should get going too----------hn……..?)

When I exited the lounge, just when I used the stairs and went to the lower floor, I saw Hotaka there.

But, her figure disappeared before I could call out to her.

(She was wearing windbreakers right? Which means she is planning to head out?)

Inside that drizzle, I wonder want kind of business she has outside.

While I was somewhat interested, I headed towards the training room.

And like that, the thing regarding Hotaka completely flew out of my mind but----------

Around an hour later, when I was reading a magazine after finishing my training, Hotaka came back to the dormitory.

…….looks like she didn't bring an umbrella with her, and she was dripping wet from her head.

"Hotaka. Where did you go that you are so wet?"

As expected I was interested this time and called out to Hotaka.

"Eh? A-ara…… Kokonoe-kun, what are you doing here……?"

"I am in the middle of break…….so, how about Hotaka?"

"Uu……e-err……."

It seemed to be something hard to say, Hotaka was alternately moving her sights from her legs to me--------

After a while, she replied back softly.

"Ru-running……."

"I see, running huh"

No wonder she came back after one hour.

“Wait, Running!? At this time and inside this rain, for more than one hour!? Even though you ran during the lessons too!?”

“U-un……..”

“Ah…….by chance, last time-------when me and Julie came back to the dormitory and passed by you at the entrance and you went outside, you were planning to run too…….?”

“U-un……..”

“Why on earth……..”

“…….ac-actually, from last time…….fwa ……..fwaa, Kushunn”

“Ah……sorry. You are still wet.”

Towards Hotaka who sneezed, I unexpectedly thought she was quite cute.

“So-sorry. Is it okay if I come back after I take a bath?”

“I get it. Then I’ll wait here.”

“Sorry to make you wait, Kokonoe-kun. Sorry to be so late.”

30 minutes passed after that and Hotaka whose cheeks were visibly blushing from a bath, came back to the lounge.

"I was reading magazines so……. It's, okay……"

I swang my head towards Hotaka who called me and apologized, I then placed the magazine on the table but----------

"What's wrong, Kokonoe-kun?"

"N-no……."

Maybe it's because she came out of the baths, her rough attire----------the thin T-shirt was transparent and her pink underwear entered my eyes making me agitated.

Incidentally, I also remembered the piggy-back I gave Hotaka last time-------

PAN!

"Hyaa!?.....Wha-what happened to you, Kokonoe-kun?"

"No, I just want to make myself motivated……."

"Mo-motivated? Aren't you in the middle of a break?"

"I was putting in some motivation to rest."

"……..Is Kokonoe-kun a little weird?"

"Maybe."

If this goes on, I might be conscious about it, and when I thought there is a chance it might be noticed, being thought of as a little weird is better.

"So, about that running matter from just now--------"

"Ah, unn. Lately, I have been running 20 kilometers everyday……"

"Even when you ran during lessons?"

"U-un…….in order to use my <<Blaze>>, *stamina is needed* so ……"

(Stamina……?)

Now that I think about it, I wonder what kind of <<Blaze>> Hotaka manifests?

It should be written on the profile list but, since I checked (What 's more roughly) only through the males, I am quite interested to what it is.

(Well, I'll find out when I have a match with her during at << Newcomer battle
New blade battle>>.)

"Speaking of which, recently your marathon time has increased. There was this kind behind the scenes huh."

Lately, Hotaka reaches the goal before the sky color changes.

Since she didn't have any stamina from the start, I thought results would appear fast but, to think she was putting this much effort in the shadows……

That day---------when I think about that day when Hotaka said some weak words, I was shocked from the bottom of my heart.

"You sure are working hard, Hotaka."

"U-un……"

While her cheeks were blushed from coming out the baths, Hotaka looked downwards a little and entwined the fingers with both her hands.

"It is thanks to Kokonoe-kun."

"Me?"

"Un. You said on that day, to try running a bit more……."

"I feel it isn't in the level of a bit more though."

"Fufu. That's because Kokonoe-kun said he ran a lot and became fast like right now……so I thought I should run a lot too……."

"Hotaka……"

"Stamina is something you obtain the more you run……. .something like talent doesn't matter, right?"

After saying that, Hotaka made a smile.

When we first met, that image of her hesitantly trying to avoid having our eyes meet was like a lie.

But when she let out the next sentence, Hotaka's smile disappeared and the tone of her voice changed.

"I……..have nothing special. Whether it is studying or sports and I have a lot of things I am bad at…….that's why if I have even one thing that I am better at than someone else, something that I can boast about, I always thought that would be nice."

Towards Hotaka who was making a lonely face, I straightened my ears and kept quiet.

"That's why, I was happy when I was told I had an <<Adapt>>. I was in high spirits when I heard it was a talent that belongs to one in a thousand. But……..after coming to Kouryou, as expected it isn't suitable for me, and nothing changed in the end even though I have an <<Adapt>>……..."

After saying it until there, Hotaka slightly swung her head and faced towards my face.

"But Kokonoe-kun, said talent doesn't matter and I will definitely change so…….I, have those words support me and kept on running everyday."

"…….somehow this is embarrassing."

I scratched my head and averted my sights and, Hotaka giggled at me.

"Last time too, I was very happy when you cheered me up."

"Haha. If you can get cheered up from that then, I will say it anytime you want."

"Re-really? Then, if by any chance I feel depressed; will you say something that will cheer me up again?"

"No problem. If you would cheer up from that then I'll say it as much as you want."

"Ah…….un. It's, a promise."

The quiet Hotaka made a small smile that makes me think of a giant flower.

Looking at that smile, I was glad from the bottom of my hearts to talk with Hotaka on that day.

After that we continued immersing ourselves in talking, the dormitory advisor then showed up in the lounge to tell us it was time to off the lights, and we returned back to our respective rooms.

"Okay then, let's work hard for the <<New blade battle (Newcomer battle)>>."

"U-un"

When i said my goodbyes in front of the staircase, Hotaka headed a few steps up before looking back.

“E-err, Kokonoe-kun. I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I have a request……..!”

“Request?”

*Bun**bun* Hotaka nodded oddly violently.

"I-I want you to call me by my name. Mi-Miyabi……..! A-all my friends call me by that…….! Tha-that's why, that's why……"

"I get it. Then it's okay to call me Tooru."

"Ah……u-un"

"Then, see you again tomorrow. Miyabi"

"Good night. To-Tooru,-kun……."

Miyabi made a smile and swing her hands before lightly go up the stairs.

Her back somehow looks in a good mood to me.

Part 2

"I'm back."

"What were you doing at a time like this, Miyabi?"

Tomoe released her sights from the book she was reading and faced towards Miyabi who came back.

"Mu……?"

"What's wrong?"

"No, I just thought, did something nice happen to you?"

"Eh!? I-I-I think nothing special happened though……..."

Miyabi's cheeks were slightly blushing and she showed an agitated state.

But, to take it according to her words, Tomoe at a time like this isn't that dumb.

(The person itself said like that so, asking more than this is probably called insensitive.)

Tomoe made a small smile so that Miyabi wouldn't notice and once again returned her sights to her book.

But inside her head, Tomoe was thinking about her roommate that just got back.

At first during enrollment, Miyabi was worried if she could catch up in the training and made a lot of dark expressions.

However, one day her psychological state became positive.

From the long time they spent together, it was natural to say Tomoe was the first one to notice that change.

(However, if I say I am not bothered then I would be lying.)

While looking at Miyabi who was lying on the bed in a good mood, Tomoe thought that.

After a while the lights were turned off, the sound of Tomoe's well regulated sleep breathing could be heard from the lower bed.

On one side, speaking of Miyabi who was using the upper bed level, she has not fallen asleep yet.

She was supposed to feel sleepy but, each time she remembered about what happened just now, she couldn't sleep.

(Tooru-kun……)

Each time she remembers about Tooru, she would naturally smile.

Until now, to Miyabi the opposite gender was her conscious subject of being bad with.

But, Tooru is different.

He didn't make fun of Miyabi's dullness. And he would push her back too.

(It would be nice if tomorrow comes faster…….)

When she thought about that, her heartbeat increased for some reason.

The reason why she started being attracted to Tooru, Miyabi was still not conscious about it yet.

Chapter 6 『I Will Be the One---That Take Your Cover!!

Part 1

A night before the <<New blade battle(Newcomer battle)>>.

The comfortable time after taking a bath has already turned into a daily thing--------

Like usual, we were drinking apple tea while watching television.

“It looks delicious, Tooru.”

“That’s true. It would be nice if I can eat that even once.”

When I agreed with her at the local gourmet being shown on the screen, Julie made a wondering face and asked.

“Tooru has not eaten it before even though it is a Japanese food?”

“Aah. I never went to *Kyushu* before.”

I was supposed to go to Kyushu on my middle school trip but, since my mental state towards my daily life changed greatly *during that summer*, I didn’t go.

If it didn't change, I would not seek <<Power>> and come to Kouryou then---------

I would probably not be passing time with Julie like this.

(The reason for coming to Kouryou, huh……)

When I thought about that, the question that arose on the first day after enrollment once again came forth.

The question of, why did Julie enroll into Kouryou.

Leaving her country, and coming to the deepest part of the east while holding anxiety----------what's more to a very special background school, a *battle technique instruction school*.

That was not all.

Once that question came across my mind, the feeling of wanting to know got bigger and bigger but---------

(This isn't something I should be asking out of curiosity……..)

I controlled myself using the same reason as the last time.

It might have a circumstance she doesn't want to be asked.

More importantly, I came to Kouryou with a circumstance which I don't want others to know.

"Tooru. It should be time to go to bed."

When I was absent minded and thinking, I was urged by Julie.

When I looked over to Julie, she was already sitting on the lower bed before I knew it.

(As expected, this is nerve wrecking…….)

I was still resisting the action of sleeping together with a girl in the same futon.

But, Julie in question did not show any nervousness at all.

I was not treated as a male but rather like a father-like existence so if I say this is natural then it is only natural but……..

Being trusted sounds nice but, somehow it was a complex feeling.

"Tooru?"

"A,aah. Let's sleep then……."

The lights were turned off and we entered the bed.

Inside the darkness wrapped in silence, I thought as an ending I called out to Julie.

"Julie"

"Yes?"

"Let's do our best tomorrow."

"Ja---"

"Okay then, good night Julie."

"Good night, Tooru."

Julie clung tightly to me.

(~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~!!)

It has already been something done every time but even so, I was so agitated by this action I couldn't get used to, and not long after, my consciousness lost to the drowsiness and fell into the darkness.

The night cleared out----------and the curtains of the << New blade battle (Newcomer battle)>> unfolded.

"Tooru, it's almost time."

Staring at the clock tower which could be seen from everywhere inside the academy, Julie muttered.

Near evening on the next day, about the time <<Newcomer battle New blade battle>> was going to start, just beside the outer walls surrounding Kouryou------we were standing-by on the place we drew by lottery.

The other <<Duo>>s were also doing the same by standing-by around different places in the academy, and were impatiently waiting.

Towards the event that is going to happen, when I was wrapped in an uplifting feeling------

*RiinGon-----**RiinGon……..**RiinGon……..*

The bells of the clock tower announced the start of the <<Newcomer battle New blade battle>> inside the academy.

“Let’s go, Julie!”

“Ja----!”

“”<<Blaze>>””

Our voices piled up and the <<Flame>> danced.

At the same time when a <<Shield>> appeared on my right arm , and <<Twin blades>> appeared on both Julie’s hands, we started running.
Double

But, it’s not like we have no plan.

Advancing straight ahead, and if we encounter other <<Duo>> we crush them head on.

(I never thought Julie would go with my plan---------no plan.)

Towards my plan which only consists of a risky advance, Julie did not hesitate and nodded.

She said, [I will choose a difficult road in order to become stronger…….I also think we should go with that].

To agree with my thoughts, we might really be compatible with each other.

(However-------)

I took a side glance to Julie running beside me.

In order to become stronger-------Julie certainly said that.

(I wonder why Julie wants to become stronger?)

But that question disappeared when we found our battle opponent from far away and we plunged in.

The time was around 6 o'clock, and the view was getting darker upon that time.

On the present time, we crushed 6 groups of <<Duo>>s and were in the middle of searching for the next opponent.

At this point, there were opponents that would receive a frontal match, and some pretending to be defeated and finding a chance to strike.

There were some that grouped together with the difference in power so, there were seriously various tactics taken by each << Duo>>, it turned into a format close to real battle with the future unpredictable.

At the present time, the hardest opponent was the Kigami & Izumi but, after they were disturbed by Julie's speed, the match ended with me giving a single strike.

The remaining strong ones are Tachibana & Miyabi, and Tora & Tatsu these two teams.

"If I think there is less than 1 hour then, it is a pain to look for an opponent."

"There seem to be a lot of <<Duo>>s that have dropped out so, it is something that can't be helped."

"Do you think it is a good idea to confirm places we have never been to?"

"The opponents are moving too, so it will be difficult."

Naturally, there were <<Duo>>s that didn't move away from their spot.

The teams' conscious about an advantages position should be like a spider waiting for its prey to get caught in its net.

"Let's head to the school building for now."

"Ja----. There is a route through the auditorium from the front and the opposite side from here but, which one should we go with ?"

"From what we can see, there is no one in the front so, let's go around the opposite side."

Julie agreed with my plan and right after we started moving to the opposite side of the auditorium-----

"O-ya, Kokonoe-kun and Sigtuna-san. Looks like you are doing well in winning."

Mikuni-sensei appeared from the auditorium and talked to us.

"Ah, thank you for patrolling, Mikuni-sensei."

In case the students get hurt during the <<New blade battle>>, there were few people including Tsukimi-sensei and Mikuni-sensei patrolling.

Newcomer battle

"No no, this is also my job……..and, now it isn't the time to be talking nor overemphasis, both of you please continue the << Newcomer battle
New blade battle>>."

[Yes, please excuse us] [Please excuse us]

I bowed lightly, and jogged towards the other side of the auditorium together with Julie.

……..we didn't notice Mikuni-sensei making a light smile towards our back.

This was what happened when we were taking side glances in the passageway connecting the auditorium and school building together.

"----!!"

When I jumped aside from the splitting air sound, a flying *something* pierced a hole to the ground in front of me.

"You came, Kokonoe, Julie."

Together with a dignified voice, Tachibana showed herself and retrieved the *something* she shot at us.

Jyarii a rustling sound of metal. The thin iron rings reflected the evening sun and it was a weapon with a drip shaped weight

attached on its tip, the <<Iron Chain chain>>----------that was Tachibana's <<Blaze>>.

Normally, the combination of a weight and chain weapon is to restrain the opponents or entangle their weapons, its sub-weapon image is strong. In reality, it pierced a hole into the earth like just now, and it holds a power enough to crack my skull if it hits my head.

"What a dangerous greeting, Tachibana."

"Fufu, I shot it so you could avoid it so, forgive me for that much. More importantly, I was about to give up when I thought it was impossible to have a match with you two when the time became only an hour."

"That goes for me too. Looks like my love call got through."

"Aah, like I love you!? Wha-wha-what are you saying suddenly! ? …….kuh, to think you would use words to confuse my heart , how cowardly!!"

"Huh? Confuse your heart? What do you mean?"

"……..ah……."

"Hey, what do you mean, Tachibana?"

"Shu-shu-shut up! Let's fight with good grace!! Tachibana style 18 arts, Tachibana Tomoe…….here I come!!"

Hyun, that sound appeared and when I thought the metal drip rotated, immediately right after Tachibana's hands become blurry-------

The metal water drop cut through the air and was heading this way.

[----------!!][Tooru!]

Even though I dodged it almost at the same timing with Julie's shout, the metal drip scratched me and plowed down the tree behind me like that.

"It has some power but------it's okay, it's just a scratch."

"Fufu, that was a nice dodge. Several people got hit with only this and ended."

"We finally met, so I can't have it end in an instant, right?"

Although I talked so much, I was having cold sweats in my mind.

(If I hadn't avoided the vital points then it seriously would have been a one-hit kill. The gap is 6 to 7 meters……?)

Although it is a breath distance thanks to the <<Lucifer>> , it was hard to make sure from that *happening* with only a slight movement of her wrist. On top of that, since the gap is wide, it is clear entering her chest area is going to be a pain.

(This is going to be hard…….also------)

"What happened to Miyabi? Are you planning to fight us without your partner?"

"Fufu, didn't you make a prediction?"

(As expected a strategy huh……)

She is probably lurking around somewhere to ambush us.

Coming to the front lines with an irregular weapon like the <<Chain Iron chain>>, means Miyabi's <<Blaze>> is probably *not a type meant for head-on combat*.

(……I didn't think Miyabi would fight head-on in the first place anyway.)

"Well then, why don't we start going-all out now."

"Aah, let's go! Julie!"

"Ja----!!"

All 3 of us moved at the same time.

I and Julie dodged the incoming metal drip by separating to the left and right and immediately dashed towards Tachibana.

The important thing here is *not getting put between the opponents*. Tachibana's sight was reflecting both of our images while,

attacking us to dull our judgments. A blind spot attack from the other side will make the decision to cope faster from the viewable side as long as it has been predicted.

"Fuu, I have already predicted your movements!!"

Jyarii-------the rustling sound of the chain. At the same time Tachibana sights were on Julie.

But the *metal drip was heading towards me.*

At the same time with me stopping my legs to block the metal drop with my <<Shield>>, Tachibana jumped into Julie's chest area.

Surprised, Julie's arm was grabbed and thrown up to the air just like that.

Even though Julie landed easily by twisting her body, Tachibana once again took distance.

"As expected from you, Tachibana."

"Tachibana style 18 arts have various martial arts passed through. Sword skills, jujitsu, arrow skills, and many more-------"

"…….This is troubling"

<<Iron Chain chain>> for distance, and jujitsu for close-combat------- just like what Julie said, there is nothing more annoying.

"Okay, I am going to keep going, Kokonoe, Julie!!"

The attacking metal drip pierced the ground one after another. That attack, launches and pull backs were fast, therefore we couldn ’t grasp the timing to enter her chest area.

However, the situation is getting poor for her since it is a one sided defense battle. The opponent still has a plan----------as long as Miyabi is still waiting, we can’t let Tachibana get the pace here.

“Julie! <<Single blade sword Saber>> throw!”

“Ja---!”

A short instruction. But that is all it needs to get through. Julie who moved to the side in an instant, followed my instruction and reached right behind her.

“A blind?”

Chyarii that sound appeared, and the <<Iron Chain chain>> shook. She was planning to make a counter-attack from looking at me and Julie’s movements.

“Julie!”

To replace the signal, I called Julie’s name------and made a front roll.

“Wha!?”

Having her predictions overcome, Tachibana made a surprised voice.

It was not from my movements. It was because she saw the << Twin blades(Double)>> thrown at me and passing through the top of my head.

Although she was attacked off guard, she still evaded the flying sword.

But, Julie who was in mid-air performed a slash attack at that moment. It was something that only belongs to Julie who has two of her most trusted weapons, and it was the attack that made me suffer defeat on the 4th match conducted after school on Monday.

However, I can say it was expected from Tachibana.

Jigiin! She somehow blocked the swung down blade with the bundled up chains.

But, that was the limit of being alone.

By the time I got up, I was already in her range.

Together with a strong shout, I made a mid-level punch and pierced towards to Tachibana's stomach.

However it was too shallow…….! Right before it hit, the hit point was decreased because she slightly twisted her body.

But even so, she was blown away for a few meters but, at the same time with Tachibana standing up--------

"Kuh……..! We are retreating for now, Miyabi!"

After shouting, she jumped into the school building.

She probably decided it was not the situation effective to use the ambush, or is this is a strategy too----------

"Julie, we're chasing!"

Without even thinking about it for an instant, we chased after Tachibana when we got the chance of winning, and dashed into the school building.

At the end of the corridor that was turning darker, we saw Tachibana kneeling down there.

Although it was shallow, it looks like she got some damaged on her.

"We'll end this."

Julie prepared her <<Twin(Double) blades>>, and filled in the distance.

Looking at that, Tachibana raised her face------and showed a smile.

"Miyabi!!"

As if to respond to that call, a thunderous roar echoed from behind us.

The classroom wall was destroyed and a shadow dashed out to the corridor from inside the enshrouding dust------It's Miyabi.

"Sorry. If I don't get hit at least once, you would probably think it is a trap and won't chase me. Okay, this will end it! Tachibana style-------Style of the big snake!!"

This time it wasn't the snap throw she used until now but a full strength full throw hitting the walls, the ceiling, and floor, the metal drip was springing around and approaching.

The reason for entering a narrow area like the corridor was also to use this.

And also------Miyabi was charging straight forward behind us.

"Tooru-kun, Julie-chan, be prepared--------!!"

In her hands she was holding a giant lance-------<< Chivalry Lance lance>>. Just like the name it is a lance originally meant to be used by a knight on a horse, and she was charging towards us while holding it with her enhanced arm strength. Even though it is a giant weapon that will make a huge chance completely if it misses but, it is extremely hard to avoid it in this narrow space.

(So this is what she meant……!!)

It took me this long to remember the conversation I had with Miyabi. The words Miyabi said about needing stamina in order to use her <<Blaze>>. If I knew she was planning to use a << Chivalry Lance lance>>, then I would have agreed with her.

The prediction that it is a much trickier <<Blaze>> for an ambush was an unthinkable wrong conclusion. Using a giant

weapon like <<Chivalry Lance>> as a ambush is completely out of my predictions but, it could be said to be a proper strategy in the point of attacking us off-guard.

(What should I do……!?)

The current situation is exactly, a lion in front and a wolf behind .

The moment I thought a quick decision would definitely determine everything----------

"Tooru! I am counting on you!"

As soon as Julie shouted, she charged into the attacking << Iron Chain>>.

Not even taking a single glance behind us, and with all her trust towards me--------*Chirin* she left behind the sound of the bell. That's why I made a vow towards her back, and shouted.

"Julie! I will------protect your back!!"

I turned behind, lowered my hips and prepared my <<shield>> towards the charging Miyabi.

"I-I am coming, Tooru-kun!!"

Will I be blown away or will I block it---------!!

GyaRiii!! The <<Chivalry Lance>> and <<Shield>> clashed.

"I-I won't lose!! I……..will show you the results of my effort! To Tooru-kun! That's why, that's why I will not loseeeee!!"

A direct battle between strength. The tremendous impact, I was pushed by that power and was about to be blown away.

(Kuh, heavy……..!!)

The results she gained from running, has certainly turned into Miyabi's flesh and blood.

As proof, that impact was transmitted to me, and even when I stood firm while pushing back, I was moving backwards.

*Mishi**mishi* the <<Shield>> creaked and even when my feet became slightly floating from the pressure--------

(But…….Like hell I will lose!!)

"SEYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!"

Zun!! I slammed my floating feet and crushed the floor.

In an instant, there were cracks coming from the floor to the wall, and at the same time I stopped moving backwards.

"Uu…….!"

No matter how much strength she put into it, towards me who was not moving like a mountain, Miyabi distorted her face---------

"Haa……I can't put any more strength……..."

Soon, at the same time with the pressure disappearing, Miyabi made a wry smile while falling on her butt.

"The results of your effort, I have seen it. You were strong, Miyabi"

"Ah……Th-thank you for praising me, Tooru-kun……. e-errrr. I, will continue running even more from now on. And, I will become even stronger then, so……."

"Aah. Work hard. I look forward for the next match"

"U-un……!"

Part 2

Just a few moments after Tooru's battle concluded-------- Tachibana Tomoe was feeling fear at the silver girl heading towards her.

At that figure dodging the <<Iron Chain chain>> which was attacking according to the word freely, and closing in the distance.

Yes, Julie did not parry with her <<Twin Double blades>>, and was dodging all of it.

There was cold sweat flowing down Tomoe's back.

Towards that movement that crosses over common sense, Tomoe found out the real meaning of the other name black wing angel which became a rumor during the entrance examination.

(I knew she was not serious during the <<Fist Practice>> but, to think it was this much!!)

The gap was filled. Now, the only problem was the time when the <<Twin (Double) blades>>'s black blade would reach her body.

(Julie, you are strong. Maybe even more than the current me……but------)

"I can't lose! In the name of Tachibana!!"

Tomoe hardened her resolve and headed out for the final battle.

Launching the <<Iron (Chain) chain>> towards the stomach as a target.

When she aimed at a part which moves little and is hard to defend, it was parried by the swords.

But, that was what Tomoe was aiming at.

She controlled the parried metal drip with her fingers and the moment she aimed at that small body from behind----------

Gikiin…….!! The sound of metal clashing echoed and Tomoe's eyes opened wide in surprise.

Julie *parried the metal drip with her left sword, in order to trust her right sword towards Tomoe.*

"It's checkmate."

"That last attack……did you predict it?"

"I felt the spirit of not giving up at any cost. So I thought there will definitely be a plan."

"Fufu, magnificent, to think you were still calm until the end……today is my complete defeat."

In the next moment, the blade made a line flash-------and Tomoe slowly collapsed.

Part 3

"Good work, Julie."

"Ja----. Tooru too, good work."

While Tooru was replying back to Julie who was making a small smile with a smile, he was astonished of Julie's judgments from just now inside his heart.

(In just that instant, she saw through many points of her opponent.)

If it is Julie then none of it would be a problem for her but, it was clear her close-combat style has bad compatibilities with Tachibana's <<Iron Chain chain>> which is mid-ranged.

But, at the same time there was that happiness regarding leaving her back to him.

"Well then. Okay, we will be going so; can I leave the rest to you?"

"U-un"

Tachibana lost consciousness from Julie's attack and was currently being looked after by Miyabi. She doesn't look injured but, because of that, towards the <<Blaze>>-------he had no choice but to be shocked at its properties is unable to injure a person once again.

(Judging from the time, one more match is the limit. If possible, I want to have a go with Tora but…….)

That moment that face was floating in his mind-------his thoughts were interrupted.

"Kuh…….
Gaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahh!!"

From the upper floor, Tora's shout echoed.

Chapter 7 『Ai(Love)Eins(One) To Julie』

Part 1

"Tooru. That voice was……..!!"

"Miyabi, stay here! I leave Tachibana to you!"

"U-un! H-how about Tooru-kun…….!?"

"We---------"

"Let's go, Tooru."

When Julie faced her sights towards me, she nodded back probably knowing my intentions.

"Aah, let's go Julie!"

"B-be careful Tooru-kun, Julie-chan!"

With Miyabi's worried voice coming from behind, towards the direction of the voice-------we climbed up stairs.

(What is this uneasiness……!)

It's the same like *that day*.

Same like that day with the dojo wrapped in flames, an indescribable nasty premonition was swirling in the depths of my heart.

(What did……..wasn't this just a normal practice match?)

It's true that, in case of getting attacked by a <<Blaze>>, an instantaneous pain would be produced.

But in the very end it was for an instant, what's more it should be slightly pain, and not be something strong enough to cause a shout.

When we reached to the highest floor, there was a shadow standing in the middle of the corridor---------a silhouette of a characteristic rabbit ears was there.

In front of the sights of that shadow, I shouted the name of my friends lying down beside the wall.

"Tora--------!!"

"Kokonoe-kun……..!"

From our shout Tsukimi-sensei who was standing still in front of Tora, turned over to us with a shocked face.

"Tsukimi-sensei! What on earth happened!?"

"I-I don't know, I just came here too!"

"Tooru. Tora and the rest have bad injuries."

When I approached closer to Tora after being called by Julie, there was a pool of blood spreading under his feet.

From what we could see, he looks like he was cut by a sharp edged tool, and suffered serious injuries in several parts.

Nearby him, his partner Tatsu also suffered serious injuries just like him. And was unconscious.

"This side also has the same injuries."

"Looks like it. Anyway, we have to bring them to the first-aid room quickly……!"

"It's okay--. Now that we are here, we can immediately contact the rescue team."

"Is that so. Thank you very much, Tsukimi-sensei."

"Uun, it is my job anyway…….more importantly, these injuries-----"

After she started performing first-aid on Tora and Tatsu, Tsukimi-sensei's expression turned cloudy.

"Is there something wrong?"

"Un. It is just a possibility but……*is this something caused from the <<Blaze>>*……."

"<<Blaze>> you say……?"

It's true that, to hurt Tora and Tatsu who <<Exceed>> s like this , needs the same-------no, needs a power more than that or else it would be difficult. Inspecting like this, the possibility of the opponent is an <<Exceed>> is very high but--------

There was only one thing I couldn't comprehend.

"Wasn't <<Blaze>> *a weapon that could not injure a person*?"

Yes, that was it. My question was exactly what Julie said.

"Tha-that's----------"

Hesitating to say, Tsukimi-sensei was having worries whether is it alright to tell us--------it was that response.

"Sensei, please tell us. Is this something caused from the << Blaze>>, didn't you just say that just now?"

"That's……..."

"Tsukimi-sensei!"

"I-I get it, I will tell you but------this is a very important confidential secret regarding the <<Lucifer>> so keep this a secret okay? …… Actually, the fact that the <<Blaze>> is a weapon that can't hurt people, is *a flat-out lie*"

"A lie…….!?"

"Are you saying it is a lie?"

"Just like you know, the <<Blaze>> is a weapon manifested from someone's <<Soul>>. That's why, it gives mental damage by meddling with that person <<Soul>>--------you understand until here right……..did you not question this before? That *even though the <<Blaze>> can damage walls or the ground, how come it can't hurt a person*"

"That's true……."

Tachibana's <<Iron Chain chain>> plowed down a tree, and Miyabi's <<Chivalry Lance lance>> destroyed the walls.

"Then, why is it peoples are the only ones that haven't been injured yet?"

"…….. That is because; all of you recognize the <<Blaze>> as a weapon that could not injure people."

"That was the first thing the director……..---------!"

"……that means, those words were the safety lock placed on us."

"Un, that is right. It is needed to know the truth in order to open the lock. But, it is impossible to hurt someone with a <<Blaze >> with only that. There is one more, an important thing needed. That is--------"

Making a strict expression that has not been seen until now, Tsukimi-sensei put the <<Blaze>>'s hidden truth in her mouth.

"*To put in killing intent*"

"---------!!"

"Hostility, malice……..strong intentions of hurting people will turn it into a lethal weapon. With just one way put into the heart, it is a weapon that could easily take away someone's life-------and that is the <<Blaze>>……ah, just like what I said, this is a highly classified information so the special lecture ends here, I am counting on you."

"I understand."

(To think the <<Blaze>> had this kind of secret hidden……. no, right now-----)

I moved my sights from sensei to Tora, and looked at his condition.

Although first-aid was done, thinking about the large amount of bleeding, it would be bad if this goes on.

"The rescue team is late……."

Judging from the time Tsukimi-sensei contacted them, it is not weird for them to be running over here anytime by now …….

"The rescue team isn't coming."

"Ehh?"

When I looked behind, Tsukimi-sensei was looking down on me while making a smile-------

And before I knew it, she was holding the silhouette of a fiendish looking <<Fang (Tebutje) sword>>.

“That-- is-- why--, I said the rescue group isn’t coming……..!”

“What, do you mean……?”

With her tone changed, I somehow managed to ask her while feeling surprised from the change of her atmosphere.

“I said the special lecture ended right.”

Tsukimi-sensei lifted the sides of her mouth.

That was a joyful smile----------but a smile filled with evil intent.

Immediately right after, the cold steel was swung down.

The drawn trail, felt frightfully slow--------

“Tooru!!”

Gikiin!! With the sound of metal clashing, the time started flowing back to normal.

“Tora…….!!”

With his consciousness back, Tora threw his <<Symbolic short sword (Katar)>>, and bounced back the <<Fang sword (Tebutje)>> being swung down towards me.

"Fu,un……..Get away fast, you idiot……..thi,s fella……is a monster……"

"What do you mean Monster……?"

For Tora who usually is filled with confidence to say that, Tsukimi-sensei should be quite a strong user.

"Seriously, disturbing me when you just escaped death…… I should have quickly finished you off instead of playing around."

"Kill…….Tsukimi-sensei! Why!? Why are you doing this!!"

"Hnn--, before I answer that question……. I will give you one more special lecture as a service♥"

In an instant, her usual tone returned and she swing the <<Fang sword (Tebutje)>> up------and cut the <<Symbolic short sword (Katar)>> in half.

"Guh, AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!!"

Immediately, Tora raised a shout and with the same time with his voice interrupted, he powerlessly collapsed to the floor.

That figure made me have a flashback of my sister-----Otoha.

“You bastard, what did you do----------?!”

I draw back my fist like shooting an arrow, and released a single strike from the anger.

---but, it hit empty space and the wall behind was destroyed.

“Kuhah. That’s one heck of a power from that <<Level>>. …… …….. Well, it doesn’t mean anything unless it hits though.”

Kuku looking at Tsukimi-sensei making a ridiculing smile, my back muscles became cold.

Monster--------It took an instant for me to understand the reason why Tora said that.

Tsukimi-sensei who was supposed to be standing in front of me , made a distance of more than 10 meters in the slight instant she evaded my attack.

“Special lecture number 2. When the <<Blaze>> is destroyed, that person will be unconscious and won’t wake up for at least a whole day so be careful♪l. Well if that is all we get when having the <<Soul>> be destroyed, it is something that I cannot ask for more------Okay then, regarding why I am doing this...”

She cut her words temporarily and replaced back the atmosphere around her.

"It's work, it's work. It's a simple job of cleaning promising looking new students."

"You say, work…….? Don't say something ridiculous!! Killing people as a job-------"

"Remember this, you brat. Any adults can kill if it is a job. The only difference is the killing method, either directly or indirectly."

"……if this is a job that means, this isn't your arbitrary then."

Even when Julie asked, Tsukimi made a light smile and swung her head.

"That goes against the duty of confidentially so I can't answer. ……well then, it's about time we end our little talk. As special service, I'll kill you bastards first before these bastards…… however, if either one of you bastards run away then----------"

"Who the hell will run away!!"

I ground my teeth, clenched my fist, and answered.

That scenery---------I never want to see someone die again.

"I won't let anyone die in front of me anymore!! Never!!"

"……Same here, Tooru. I won't let anyone die in front of me……!"

Julie nodded and stood beside me.

"Kuhah, mere <<Level 1 I>>s barking like that……."

Kukuku while laughing, Tsukimi-sensei----------no, Tsukimi expanded the killing intent she was releasing.

"Well then let's start!! Entertain me even if it last for one minute , one second!!"

Signaling with her shout, Tsukimi kicked the ground and charged-------

"Uh!?"

Her figure suddenly disappeared and I doubted my eyes.

"Up!"

"Wha!?"

It was exactly in that moment I raised my sights from hearing Julie's voice, Tsukimi kicked the ceiling.

My reaction was one moment late from those unexpected movements.

"Tooru!!"

Tebutje

Gyariiin! The <<Fang sword>> aimed at me, was ward off by Julie this time, protecting me.

She landed on the ground without losing her balance and Tsukimi released a second attack by making a side sweep.

Gakyaaan! The sound of metal violently clashing echoed.

This time, even though I used my <<Shield>> to block----------

"Uaaaaaaaah!!"

She then swung down with all her strength like that and I was blown away.

"Tooru, are you okay……!?"

"Aah, I am okay…….but, what power……"

The moment when I thought I completely blocked her, I was then pushed back.

The movement she showed before was frighteningly fast, and her power surpasses mine while her speed surpasses Julie's.

Her abilities that she showed during the physical ability enhancement training were only just a portion of it.

"Kuhaha, I'm glad I'm glad. From not ending just from that."

While making a fun smile, she made a sharp and heavy attack with a breathtaking speed.

"Kuh……!!"

Even though I kept on barely protecting myself, it was a one sided defensive battle and the situation will certainly get gradually bad if this keeps up.

---if it is one person.

"I won't let you. I will be troubled if you forget about me."

Julie went behind Tsukimi and made a side sweep with her sword--------

But, Tsukimi repelled it with her <<Fang (Tebutje) sword>> without looking back.

"On top of it being 2 going against 1, I can't really praise you for attacking from behind, silver head."

"I don't think it is unfair if the opponent is in a much higher class."

"Same thoughts here!"

In no time, I attacked.

Although her carefree smile did not break, as expected even Tsukimi had no choice but to go defensive from the cooperative offence.

"Oooto, this is fun, this is fun."

2 vs 1. Even though we performed quite a number of hits, we couldn't land something that could be called a final hit.

……but, the moment when Tsukimi slightly stopped her legs when blocking Julie's attack.

(Over here!!)

That very instant, I clenched my fist hard and stepped into the most important and also the final chance of winning.

"Hiiiiitttttt!!"

Right now once more, I pulled my fist back like shooting an arrow, and the 2nd time of the strike I can shoot daily-------Thunder god's Mjolnir strike-------was released.

My muscle and bone creaked. If this doesn't hit, then I would probably be powerless.

But----------it was slightly far away.

Although it is cruel, my fist only scratched Tsukimi's clothes.

"Kuhahahaha. Y.o.u m.i.s.s! The distance was just a little off!"

Just a few centimeters, but that made a big difference in the distinguishing victory.

I became impatient from the winning chance I saw for an instant and slightly failed in judging the distance.

"Damn, it…….!"

"Well then, it's my turn next, <<Irregular>>!!"

"I already told you I won't let you……..!!"

Towards Tsukimi holding the <<Fang[Tebutje] sword>> aloft, even though Julie once again forced her way through using combination hits, Tsukimi took back steps to avoid.

However the flow did not stop there.

Although Tsukimi once again went on the defensive from Julie's specialty charging combination hits, she could not get rid of the carefree smile from her face.

Not long later, the moment the flow was interrupted-----

The corner of the joyful smile Tsukimi was making lifted further up.

"Kukuh, this time for sure, let's go with my turn then!"

Although it is just one sword, she is not inferior at all to Julie's combination attacks------no, it was an evil blade storm even faster.

Completely turning defensive, Julie somehow managed to block but, she was retreating little by little.

Gyariin! The nasty sound of metal clashing echoed and Julie lost her balance.

A straight attack was done there. Even though it was hard, Julie managed to block but couldn't kill off Tsukimi's physical strength and got blown away just like that.

"Julie----------!!"

Raising a shout and not caring about my body, I jumped at Julie to catch her.

But, I was pushed away by the strong blow and after a flashy sound echoed, the classroom door was broken through and we showily charged into the tables scattering all around.

"Uh,kuh……..!! Julie, are you okay!?"

"Ja----. Thanks to you……..but even so, it was an unbelievable strength. It's expected from someone selected to be a special teacher here."

It would seem she wasn't injured, and I made a sigh of relief.

---but, after I immediately re-brace myself, I made a bitter decision and said it.

"Julie, take Tora and the rest with you and run away."

"Tooru?"

"I will buy some time. That's why Julie, after you move Tora and Tatsu to a safer place, call Mikuni-sensei for help-----"

The moment I said until there, Julie used her index finger and touched my lips before swinging her head.

"Nai, I refuse. You won't last 5 minutes with that body."

"……..You saw through it huh."

"You said Thunder god's strike (Mjolnir) causes quite a burden in the body. And just now, Tooru said this. *I won't let anyone die in front of me anymore*. And I said this. *I won't let anyone die in front of me*. so----"

Julie directed her red eyes (Ruby eyes) towards the nearby entrance.

"I won't run."

The sun completely fallen and a bunny ear silhouette entered the dim classroom.

"Well then, it's about time we end this."

"……you can end it if you want but, what are you planning after killing us? Isn't time the only problem for the academy side to notice?"

"No need to worry, I won't do something that will expose me. Even if I am exposed, a school is a place where if a problem occurs, they will use their power to cover it up instead of investigation for the cause…….okay, now that my question is cleared, it is my turn to ask questions too."

Tsukimi crawled her tongue on the blade and made a light smile.

“Which one of you wants to die first?”

The small light illuminating the dark classroom reflected the blade.

It looked an ominous light but, we were not afraid and replied back almost at the same time.

[Julie I will--------][Tooru I will--------]

“”Protect you!!””

“Kuhah, even though it isn’t long, as expected from a <<Duo>>. Or is it a Hollywood suitable male female relationship has been made?…….well whatever is okay I guess. There is no difference since both of you are going to die anywayy!!”

Tsukimi swung down making a sword flash, and I blocked it.

Although Julie attacked at that moment, Tsukimi was already not there---------- she kicked the wall, floor, ceiling, using movements transcending humans befitting the name of <<Exceed>> and, she was toying with us.

I and Julie faced our backs together, and we continued protecting each other from the attacking evil blade from all directions but, scratches gradually increased, and we became disadvantageous.

(Damn, she is just toying with us……!)

My stamina was depleting, and after one step and another, defeat-------- the reality of death is getting closer.

"----------!!"

Julie failed in blocking and fresh blood was scattered out from her white skin.
Snow white

In the next instant, her small chin was kicked, and Julie was sent flying to the corner of the room.

"Julie---------!!"

At the same time I shouted, I grabbed a nearby table and swang it.

As expected even Tsukimi couldn't dodge this and was sent flying the opposite side of where Julie was.

"Are you okay, Julie!?"

"--------!! I am, okay……"

When I ran over, Julie distorted her face in pain.

Coming from the wound running along her thighs, blood was ceaselessly flowing out.

To Julie who has that speed as her asset, it could be said it is the same with her strongest weapon killed off.

However, since the situation was getting even hopeless, it conversely made me serious.

I clenched my fist. For the strongest attack I have.

It was strange enough whether if I can release the 3rd shot which crosses my limits.

But if I can't release it, we'll die.

Not only me, but also my friends, and even the girl in my arms.

(I will definitely……protect them!!)

I have to release it, and precisely end this.

It doesn't mean anything unless it hits……Tsukimi said this.

(Then I have to think of a way to hit!)

"Too……..ru……..."

In that hopeless situation, Julie called me weakly.

"Sorry. If you didn't become my <<Duo>> you wouldn't have to go through this……."

"Nai, there is no such thing……I was very happy when Tooru brought his hands out to me. Although it was not long but, whether it was drinking apple tea or, the time we had matches or, the time we watched tv together, it was very enjoyable so……that's why, please do not say that."

"Julie……."

Hearing the silver girl words, even though not even a month passed but, the feelings that I will never forget float out like a rotating lantern----------

"----------!!"

Inside there was a possibility----------I found out the technique how the Thunder god's strike can hit, and I was shaken by a shock as if I was struck by a lightning bolt.

Mjolnir

(That's right, <<Duo>>……..this is it……!)

Although it could be called a possibility, it might be in the level to be called a miracle.

But, right now I have to believe in this or else there is no other way to survive.

Yes, this is a road that can only be opened by *believing*.

However, before this could be reached, there is something I have to do no matter what.

(For that……!)

"uh Seriously……now my clothes are dirty, damn it."

In front of my sights, there was a shadow standing up while cursing.

---I knew this but, as expected there was no damage.

Looking at Tsukimi, Julie pressed on her wounds to try to get up but------

"Julie, please rest here quietly. I will fight by myself from here."

"Tooru……?"

"I will definitely protect you, Julie."

"Kuh, Kuahahahaha! Are you retarded. Even though you were suppressed in 2 vs 1, now of all things, you say by yourself? You say protect? Are you seriously saying that?"

"Aah, I am serious. I will defeat you alone and protect Julie!!"

"Tooru, it is impossible to do it alone……..! I will also…..!!"

"……Julie. I am happy for those feelings but, right now please follow what I say."

"B-but……."

I faced my back to Julie who was perplexed from my words and stared at Tsukimi.

“Okay come! Your evil blade, I will stop it!!”

“Kuhah, you will regret the more you bark, <<Irregular>>. Since you said it like that, I will leave you half-dead. And then----------“

The tip of her blade was pointing to me at first, and then it was pointing at Julie next.

“I will kill that silver head in front of you who can’t move! And for last, you will die while grieving on how powerless you are, from your words!!”

At the same time with her roar, Tsukimi attacked.

However, no matter how many times she made sharp blade flashes, I blocked all of it with my <<Shield>>.

(I won’t let you……! I will never let anyone else become like Otoha!!)

Burdened and tired, my body felt heavy like lead but, the feeling of protecting Julie, the oath made my concentration to its limit and was moving my body.

But that was not all.

In the place I am standing----------thanks to the place of the corner of the classroom, the sword slash path which was hard to see through until now was limited to the forward direction and made it easier to read.

On top of that, since Tsukimi was keeping her powers in check in order to leave me half-dead, each step in from each attack turned shallow, and became lighter.

"Don't persevere!!"

Gakiin!! The <<Fang Tebutje sword>> violently hit on the <<Shield>> and I came face to face with Tsukimi.

"What's wrong, didn't you say you were going to make me regret? At the very least, show me if you can make at least one scratch on this <<Shield>>."

"You sure piss me off, oi……. I changed my thoughts. As expected I should start killing you first <<Irregular>>!! I will slice that prided <<Shield>> of yours together with you!!"

Tsukimi's irritated attitude was exposed and she emptied some distance before preparing her sword above her head.

The expanding pressure shook the atmosphere and *Chiri** Chiri* the blood lust was stabbing my skin.

A full power strike is coming.

Just like her words, in order to slice through this <<Shield>> together with taking my life away. But------

"*I was waiting for this time, for this time to be able to read your breathing pattern.*"

Without looking away from her, I whispered to Julie with a soft voice.

"But, it is impossible for me alone from this point onwards……
……but, I believe I can do it when it is two people."

"Tooru…….?"

Hearing my words, Julie made a doubtful face.

"We are twin blades tied together with a bond so, we will definitely…….!!"

"What are you blabbering about over there? Since that is your farewells to this world, how about you make a love confession with a loud voice for last, like I LOVE YOU! Kuhahahahaha!!"

Towards Tsukimi who was giving out a disgusting laugh, I felt *thankful* for the first time.

"Then, I guess I will engulf myself in your words then."

"Aaah?"

I took a deep breath------and shouted

"Love[Ai][1g 1] to-------Julie!!"

"To-Tooru……..!?"

"Kua-------ahaahahaha!! This guy seriously confessed!!"

Ignoring Tsukimi, I once again shouted.

"I will------*Tou*!!"

"----------!"

Julie gasped-------that was the last instant, and was the start.

"This is thanks for the laugh!! I will slash both of you togetherr!!"

Tsukimi announced that while pointing the sword at me-------and jumped in.

The cold steel was swung down in a slightly further distance than me.

"Diiieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!"

Even if I block this, Thunder god[Mjolnir]'s strike will only cut through the air like last time. But--------

(Now…….!!)

Believing in everything, I pulled my fist back like shooting an arrow.

"Julie----------!!"

"Whaa!?"

GIkiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinnnnnnn!! The violent weapon echoed throughout--------and Tsukimi's face distorted in shock.

*An unsuitable clear *Chirin* sound of a bell was in front of her in this place.*

That's because Julie stepped into Tsukimi's chest area, and blocked her <<Fang Tebutje sword>>.

"Why…….are you……silver headdddd!!"

A small chance was born from her shock.

And in this moment, this very instant, it is the last chance of winning----------the opened path of possibility that could be called miracle.

"The one ending-----is you!!"

"Kuhahahahah, too bad! You're far!!"

"I am not-----far!!"

Suddenly pulling her body, Tsukimi was certainly slightly distant from me.

But that was, *if I was aiming for Tsukimi's body*.

"Pierce through----------!!"

My fist rapidly cut through the air.

The Thunder god's strike (Mjolnir) released beyond my limits-----seized the <<Fang sword (Tebutje)>>, piercing through it and was smashed.

"Guh……uu……."

"Please don't force yourself, Tooru."

"A-aah…….. I didn't plan on forcing myself though……."

"It is not good to act tough. Please take care of your body more."

"I know. Thank you for worrying about me, Julie."

"Ja---. You are welcome…….okay, I will be going to take a bath now."

"Aah, take your time."

Nodding, Julie walked towards the dressing room while dragging her leg--------she turned around half-way.

"No peeking okay, Tooru."

"Ju-Julie"

"It's a joke."

Towards me who was making a bitter face from the bitter memories, Julie made a small smile and disappeared into the dressing room.

(Seriously……..even though it is tough for herself too……..)

While feeling painful looking at her dragging her legs, I vividly remembered the ----------<<New blade battle(Newcomer battle)>>.

3 days have passed after that day------entering the world's GW, and Kouryou academy was not an exception so we entered the long-term holiday. Even though we finally had consecutive holidays, we did not go outside anywhere and passed a majority of time inside the room.

……rather, we had no choice but to take a rest.

Although the <<Exceed>>'s regenerative abilities are several times better than an ordinary person, my body was still creaking and I could not move properly.

It means the number of Thunder god's strike(Mjolnir) which was released over my limits was, that much of a burden to my body.

It looks like Julie could finally walk but, luckily her wounds would not leave any after-effects.

Tora and Tatsu managed to escape death, and it looks like they won't be coming out from the medical treatment building during GW.

(Even so, it's amazing we managed to win against that annoying opponent……)

Looking back at the fight with Tsukimi, I seriously thought that.

In order to gain victory, it was essential to pile several conditions on each other.

One is to make an attack that will definitely kill me.

Fighting alone, by telling her to stay quiet, she will be conscious about Julie being out of battle potential, and be very conscious of me blocking with my <<Shield>>.

Also, the breathing and Ai--------telling these two words, to make her notice my aim.

If I know a big swing is coming, reading her breathing will be easy.

Julie who suffered injuries entered her chest area, and somehow managed to block the attack since she was closer to the opponent's fulcrum making the attack power drop.

Tebutje

Next was to break the <<Fang sword>>----------the <<Blaze>> manifested by the soul.

Having her <<Soul>> broken, Tsukimi was restrained by Mikuni-sensei who came running after Miyabi and Tachibana contacted the Academy side, when they came to see us since we weren't really coming back.

After that, I don't know what happened to Tsukimi.

(What kind of goal did she have……?)

It seems the academy side doesn't plan on telling us about it.

From Mikuni-Sensei who was present during Tsukimi's restraining, he made sure we won't tell anyone about this matter and marked the end of this matter. (It was in an unsatisfying way but, it is one matter down just in case…….)

I drank up the lukewarm apple tea and leant close to the wall.

Since it was annoying I could not move my creaking body so, it looks like today will also be another day only watching television--------and it was on that time when I thought that.

"Tooru"

Hyokooto Julie brought her face out from the dressing room. And water droplets were still dropping from her hair.

Incidentally I could almost see her small shoulders, thin arms, and also her chest so I averted my sights in panic.

"Wha-what's wrong?"

"I am very sorry about this but, could you please take the towel for me."

"Towel……?"

"Ja----. I forgot to bring it with me. It is in the 2nd drawer from the top of my clothing case, so please."

"A-aah. I get it……."

After nodding, I opened Julie's clothing case and peeked inside.

(Uuh, I look like a pervert……)

Even though I was asked to do so, I can't let anyone see me searching through a girls' clothing case.

(Towel…….is this it? It is in the place like she said but-------)

It's true the towel was in the second drawer.

It was beside the *oddly folded cloths*.

While thinking I should not be looking at it, whether it is something with a lot of frills attached to it or there was a lot of

white, I have accidentally found out something that was better off with me not knowing about it.

"So-sorry for the wait……."

"Sorry to make you force yourself, Tooru."

After I brought the towel to the dressing room with my creaking body, Julie extended her hands out with her body barely coming out just like just now. Even though the situation was only a situation and it can't be helped, because her skin color ratio was much higher than usual I had trouble looking for a place to look……and in that moment I thought that.

"Uuh…….!"

A painful voice was let out.

When extending her hand, she probably put her body weight on her injured leg unconsciously.

She then fell forward from unable to support her body--------and Julie came out in the state when she was born.

"Bu!? Ju-Julie!!"

I suddenly catch her but----------since I was unable to put any strength into my legs, we fell to the floor just like that.

"Ouchouchouch……"

My eyes were sparkling since I hit the back of my head.

(Uh……I-isn't this…….)

After my sights gradually turned back to normal, I understood that the situation has turned into something unbelievable.

The fact of right now, I was hugging a naked girl.

Silver Blonde Ruby eyes Snow white
Silver hair, red eyes, white skin---------

All of that perfectly joined together and this girl looked as if she was a delicately manufactured doll.

She was unlike a human; I would believe it if I was told she was an Angel.

"To-Tooru……"

Her face was closer than ever before.

Julie's cheeks were slightly red.

That redness---------that embarrassment was the proof that this girl is a human with warmth and not a doll nor an angel.

"Julie…….errr……."

During this time, I had no idea what I was about to say.

It was because I could not say any further than that.

That's because------

"Kokonoe. I brought fomentation over. And bandages for Julie too."

"To-Tooru-kun, Julie-chan, hello……."

Turning into something troubling, the girls we became acquainted with entered the room.

[Ko-Kokonoe…….][To-Tooru-kun]

Seeing that the naked girl----------Julie was being hugged closely by me, both of their faces stiffened.

"Ko-koko-Kokonoe! Wha-wha-what kind of shameless thi-thing are you doing?! Making Ju-Ju-Julie naked, what on earth, what are you, what are you doing----------!?"

"N-no, this is a misunderstanding…….!!"

"Yo-your shamelessness knows no bounds!! Miyabi! Don't keep quiet there and say something!!"

Contrastive to Tachibana's angry shouting, Miyabi softly muttered *only one word*.

"<<Blaze>>……."

The <<Flame>> danced from the <<Word that carried strength >>, and the <<Chivalry Lance lance>> appeared in Miyabi's hands-------

"Wai, a sec, Miyabi!? Ju-Julie! Explain how this got this way----------"

"Tooru-kun you……Pervert----------!!"

Like this, a small commotion occurred for last and the curtains of the <<New blade battle(Newcomer battle)>> finally closed.

Part 2

"-------that's all for the <<New blade battle(Newcomer battle)>> recording."

About the time Tsukimi Rito <<Fang sword(Tebutje)>> was destroyed by Tooru, and collapsing, a male------Mikuni stopped the video.

"Kuhah. Going to the extent of showing the video, even though it was not done cynically, isn't my result report enough—"

The one using abusive language was Rito who was just shown fighting with Tooru in the video.

"A picture is worth a thousand words, it's something like that. And more importantly your report was too rough."

"Yeah Yeah. Sorry bout that."

Completely calm, towards Rito who was swinging her rabbit ears, Mikuni swang his head with a sigh.

"But even so, to think you seriously went to kill……if anything happens by any chance, what were you planning to do?"

"……I don't mind. It was me who told her to leave it to her decision on the spot."

After the owner of the voice opened her mouth for the first time , Mikuni and Rito directed their sights to her.

Sitting further up, there was a girl wearing a gothic dress around her-------it was Tsukumo Sakuya, Kouryou academy's director.

"When a seed bud in a harsh environment, it is only then when it will bloom to a beautiful flower, it is what I think."

Before the <<New blade battle(Newcomer battle)>>, Rito made a smile when she was told that things would be left to her and killing might be okay depending on her. During that time, having said every single word Sakuya said without changing any of it, Mikuni lowered his head in apology before, returning back to the previous topic of the video .

"However, this is a surprise. To think a person that could drive a << III (Level 3) >> away appeared *again*……"

It was not surprising for Mikuni to be surprised.

Normally, a person's ability will be enhanced several times after going up one <<Level>>.

Therefore, if there are 2 ranks different, it would be a hopeless difference in strength even though it is against 2.

That is why, even though there are various factors involved, it was a lucky result for Tooru and Julie who is << Level 1 I >> to defeat Rito who is << Level 3 III >>.

"…… Seriously, I never thought they would practice something that was just thought out recently. It's amazing he can make a calm decision in that situation."

"Oya, it is not like you to praise the opponent who defeated you ."

"There are times that even I would praise."

While making a sarcastic smile, Rito threw her legs and sat on the sofa.

"Aren't you in a very good mood? Perhaps you took a liking to him?"

"Kuhah, don't spout crap--------is what I wanted to say but, I can't deny that……well, if you say I am interested in him then you are much more than me, Ojou-sama[1g 2]"

Those words,

"Fufu, it is only natural to be interested in him since he is someone who is related to <<Him>>."

"*That guy*, huh……."

Hearing one sentence from Sakuya, Mikuni and Tsukimi raised their eyebrows slightly together.

"…… Well then, my job is done with this but-------what should I do from now on?"

"As you like. Rito, do as you wish……."

"As I like Nee~…….Kuhah, if that is the case----------I guess I' ll go on like this."

"I understand."

"…… Is that okay? If Tsukimi is left behind, then there is a possibility our connections with her will be discovered by them--------"

"The reason doesn't matter. They have no skills to confirm this, Mikuni."

*Kusu**Kusu* Sakuya made a bewitching giggle.

Towards that smile, that decision, Mikuni nodded knowing any further views would not be forgiven.

"Then, as you wish."

Not long later, there was only one presence left inside the room filled with quietness.

Inside the darkness, the remaining girl was sinking her body deeply into a luxurious chair.

After a long silence, Sakuya slightly lifted the corners of her mouth.

Enlightened everything was starting to move, inside that she felt a certain thing in her seat.

"It is the start of the party……..."

On how that party's demise is concluded, she does not know, for Sakuya *is not God*.

Even if it is her who stands in the forbidden realm for God's manipulating human genetics.

As long as they are humans, they will not know the future.

Therefore the black dress girl muttered.

"I pray, that our paths would reach the <<Absolute Duo>>."

Epilogue

The crimson flames were burning everything down.

Again, this dream comes to the front of my mind.

A grey dream.

A nightmare with red as its only color.

Otoha's death.

Those words from my best friend

"They are dead because they were weak."

And then------with a shout overflowing with hopelessness, rage and resentment, the memories called a nightmare concluded.

"Tooru!?"

It looks like I woke her up with shout I released, and Julie took a peek at me in worry.

"Sorry…….. I surprised you, again……"

"Please do not mind it. ……more importantly, are you okay Tooru?"

"Aah…….. I just……had a bad dream……."

My clothes were wet and sticky with cold sweat and I could only say it was unpleasant.

"……sorry, I'll change my clothes and then I'll go get a drink in the lounge so, don't mind me and go back to sleep, Julie. I am really sorry I woke you up."

I quickly changed my clothes before exiting the room.

"Tooru……"

Just before I closed the door, I heard Julie's worried voice but I did not stop.

While thinking I made her even more worried; this unpleasantness---- this squirming dark feeling in the depths of my heart and the face distorted by this feeling, I didn't want Julie to see any of it.

Blue night----------

After coming out to the balcony from the lounge, I was waiting for a world befitting that representation.

The pale moon was shining up in the sky, and it was a peaceful and kind.

But the dark feeling was still swirling inside my heart.

That moment on that summer day --------- has yet left my mind.

“Otoha…….”

I lost everything.

My precious sister, my precious benefactor, and the people I considered the same as my family.

Ever since, I followed my best friend’s words, to seek <<Power>> and reached to this academy.

(If I had been strong, would I have not lost everything……?)

Time will not go back.

Even if I seek <<Power>> now or gain it, everything I lost will not come back.

I know there is no meaning.

But even so, I have no choice but to seek it.

In order to slam these dark feelings towards my best friend who destroyed everything; my precious daily life.

Even though 2 years passed after that, the rage and hate did not change inside me.

It has been one month since I came to Kouryou academy---------

"Tooru……"

Suddenly, someone called out to me from behind.

I didn't need to turn around.

Because there is only one person that would call out to me in that tone.

"……you didn't sleep, Julie."

"You hadn't come back so……"

"……..sorry to make you worry. I was just cooling off…… let's go back and sleep."

To avoid letting Julie see my face, I walked past her flank and was about to go out to the lounge------

"Tooru…….!!"

I stopped from hearing her shout.

When I turned around, Julie was looking straight at me.

Filled with a pitiful light, she was staring right at me with her red eyes.
Ruby eyes

"I heard, what Tooru was saying during your nightmare……."

This did not surprise me because I thought that might have been the case.

"Otoha……why……answer me…….. I won't forgive you……. I will definitely--------kill you"

"……. Forget it."

Even though it was futile, I could only say this.

"Is that…….Tooru's goal……..?"

"Forget it……!!"

The atmosphere shook from my shout.

But Julie slowly swung her head-------

"Me too-------"

Under the moonlight, she exposed her white (Snow white) skin.

"Julie…….?"

"I am the same as Tooru."

"Same……as me……?"

In that instant, a gust of wind passed by and made her Silver Blonde Silver hair flutter about.

My back muscle twitched.

There is long straight scar carved into her exposed back.

Bathed in the pale blue light of the moon, these words fell from the silver girl's mouth-----that confession.

"I am also the same as Tooru-------an <<Avenger>>."

<End>

`

Translation Notes and References

Chapter 2:

1. ↑ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seiza
2. ↑ Julie calls him in katakana (ト) while his others call him in his kanji form ()
3. ↑ Different forms of Julie's name in Kanji = Starting from the first--百,,,

Chapter 3:

1. ↑ Old lady, could also be used to call grandmother but in this case it isn't
2. ↑ Cherry blossoms
3. ↑ Rice ball, usually wrapped with seaweed

Chapter 4:

1. ↑ cherry blossoms
2. ↑ paired karate kata, belt-work
3. ↑ Sticky rice cakes

Chapter 5:

1. ↑ Heart beat sound effect
2. ↑ Golden Week
3. ↑ Pervert man
4. ↑ Japanese chess

Chapter 7:

1. ↑ A word play. Ai sounds like "I" but also has the meaning of love (愛.
2. ↑ My lady